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SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI MEMORIAL NUMBER

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UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

# JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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SUBHADRA KUMAR SEN



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## IN MEMORIAM

PROFESSOR SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI died on 29 May 1977. His death, even at eighty seven, was premature, for his creative and critical energy was unbedimmed—he was still actively engaged in research on the origin of the *Rāmāyana* and on other diverse subjects. In his reminiscences, a former pupil and colleague aptly quotes Shakespeare: we 'shall not look upon his like again'. He was a savant in the true sense of the term, and while his major concern was the phenomenon of language—spoken and written—he could justly claim all knowledge as his province. And yet his formidable erudition was only one aspect of his many-sided personality, and his heart was as capacious as his intellect.

Professor Chatterji was associated with the post-graduate department of English of the University of Calcutta for many years, and the following essays are our humble tribute to the memory of a great teacher, man of letters and humanist. Several eminent scholars—Indian and foreign—have contributed to this volume, and we are thankful to them for their generous response and co-operation. However, no tribute to Professor Chatterji can be adequate, and we are painfully conscious of our limitations; but we have at least the assurance that in paying homage to a great man we re-discover our lost heritage, our own humanity.

BHABATOSH CHATTERJEE  
SUBHADRA KUMAR SEN



## IN MEMORIAM S. K. C.

Qui dum vixit fuit princeps eorum qui scientiam linguarum in hac terra docuere, amatus quoque omnibus quod magnus ipse amator fuerat vitae rerumque omnium. Linguas vero multas amabat, quod vitam ipsam amabat, per scientiam earum scientiam vitae petens. Ut Terentius, nihil humanum a se alienum putabat; solebat autem jucunde loqui ut sapientiam laetitia celare posset.

Discipuli quamquam indigni sumus, libro hoc non fortasse in toto indigno laudes ejus celebramus.

Pro Facultate Anglica,  
K. D. BOSE.

## SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI : IN AND OUT OF THE UNIVERSITY

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SUKUMAR SEN

IT IS well known that Suniti Kumar Chatterji was a profound scholar and that his scholarship extended far and wide over his own specialized field of study. But as a man he did not show in his behaviour the least of the expected crust of solidity of scholarship which is usually found even in scholars of a much lesser calibre.

Sunitibabu's—I still like to call him Sunitibabu, although he was my guru—personality was unforbidding in approach by any man from any walk of life. There was always a warmth of subtle welcome in his attitude to life. He was approachable by anyone. (It was however not always convenient to him. As a matter of fact his amiability and politeness thwarted his academic activities.)

Sunitibabu was a very likeable man and he had no enemy worth the name. (Toward the end of his life he happened to provoke the wrath of some religious fanatics by some of his observations on the *Ramayana*. This was perhaps his only bitter experience of unreasonable hostility and malice.) Anyway we may say that Sunitibabu was one of that very rare group of our outstanding men who had fortunately enjoyed uninterrupted popularity. He was not a good speaker nor a politician. He belonged to no religious group or sect. He was revered for his scholarship and profession. And his popularity sprang from it.

Professor Chatterji was interested in almost everything that has been achieved by man in thought and deed from the early days since when prehistory has succeeded in revealing it. In the later years he was often heard quoting Terrence : *homo sum homini nihil a me alienum puto*.

He was deeply interested in the phenomenon of speech as it is the greatest achievement of men ; as a matter of fact it is Speech that has made man from out of the ape. The next subject he was interested in was ancient history. Linguistics and history are closely associated with ethnology specially in India as it is the place where many races and tribes speaking many tongues have met, combined or lived more or less apart

in peace. Sunitibabu became interested in Greek history and culture—especially in Greek art and literature—when he was a first year student at Scottish Churches where he had the opportunity of reading with renowned professors like Bipinbehari Sen and Adhar Chandra Mukherji. In his senior college years he read with professors M. Ghosh and H. M. Percival of Presidency College from whom (specially from Ghosh) he imbibed a lasting love for Greek language and literature. His taste for European classics combined with his special field of study for the M.A. degree—Old English and Anglo-Saxon Philology—made him forsake the study of classical history and take up the study of Germanic and Indo-European linguistics. He did not study Linguistics for job-hunting as most of the scholars of the day now; it was his normal course of studies that opened to him the gates of the science of speech.

Sunitibabu was deeply interested in human behaviour and was therefore interested in the Bengali stage. It is well known how he had helped in his college days the successful amateur performances of D. L. Roy's *Chandragupta* at Calcutta University Institute by his friends Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, Naresh Chandra Mitra and others. Years later when Bhaduri had left college teaching and adopted stage-acting as his profession, Sunitibabu was helpful to him in the staging of Jogesh Chandra Chaudhury's *Sita* which was undoubtedly one of Bhaduri's great stage successes.

Sunitibabu was as much interested in uttered speech as in the written word. He could recite very well poetry—English, Bengali, Sanskrit, Persian etc. In his student days he had won medals and prizes for recitation at contests organized by the Calcutta University Institute.

Sunitibabu had a brilliant academic career. He passed the Entrance Examination (1907) in the first division securing a senior government scholarship, from Seal's Free College and the First Arts Examination (1909) with the same brilliance from Scottish Church College. He passed the B.A. Examination (1911) from Presidency College with honours in English standing first (? or second). He obtained the M.A. degree in English (Group B) standing first in the first class. (In English [Group A] his rival was Miss Regina Guha who stood second [? or first] in the B.A. list.)

In those days the University could nominate one or two of her best students for the higher administrative services under the Government. Sunitibabu and his family would have liked nothing better. But that was not to be. His extreme myopia stood in the way of any Government appointment. The other honourable profession left for the educated was

the law. But Sunitibabu had not read law as he had no liking for it. So he had to take to the last but not undesirable profession left to an alumnus of the University—that of a college teacher. Soon after his passing the M.A. Examination he was invited to join the faculty of English at Vidyasagar College which was then called Metropolitan Institution, the first non-Government college affiliated to the University and established by Vidyasagar. His friend Sisir Kumar Bhaduri was already there in the same faculty. In Metropolitan Institution Sunitibabu worked for a few months. In 1914 he was called by Asutosh Mukherji to join the teaching section of the University which was started in 1910 by the new University Act, for which thanks must be given to Lord Curzon among others. Sunitibabu was appointed an assistant to Professor Knox, one of the two University professors in English (the other professor being Henry Stephen, a name held in veneration by at least two generations of graduates and post-graduates of the University). In 1917, on the strength of the report of the Sadler Commission, the government persuaded by Asutosh Mukherji sanctioned the establishment of the Post-graduate Teaching and Research Department. This was the most significant incident in the history of the University since its establishment in 1855. Chatterji was now a lecturer in the department of English headed by Professor Stephen. In the meanwhile he had come in touch with Haraprasad Shastri and Rakhaldas Banerji, the old veteran and the young brilliance, and became interested in the historical study of the Bengali language. He had done good preliminary work and submitted his result for a Premchand Roychand Studentship. In 1919 he was awarded a Government of India scholarship for higher study in Sanskrit to be pursued in Great Britain. Sunitibabu left Calcutta for London (September 1919).

The School of Oriental Studies was established in London a few years ago for conducting intensive study and research in Oriental (i.e. non-European) language, literature and history. He joined that Institution and after a year of study was enrolled for the degree of Doctor of literature. The theme of his research was the history of the Bengali language. He also enrolled for the Diploma in Phonetics under the great phonetician Daniel Jones, the discoverer of the phoneme and other niceties of Modern Phonetics. He attended classes in Germanic Philology and Indology also. Dr L. D. Barnett was his research guide.

Sunitibabu was awarded the Diploma in Phonetics and produced one of his small but outstanding works in Bengali Linguistics and Phonetics : *A Brief Sketch of Bengali Phonetics*. It was published in the *Bulletin* of the school (1922) and reprinted many times as a pamphlet. It still



retains its value as a text book. Sunitibabu's doctoral thesis was a bulky volume with quotations from languages showing a variety of scripts, and so he was permitted to submit handwritten copies instead of the type-written or printed. The thesis was accepted—Sir George A. Grierson was one of the examiners—and he was awarded the degree (1921). The Government of India extended his scholarship for another year and he spent it in Paris. At Sorbonne he was enrolled as a student under Jules Bloch. He would have liked to get the doctor's diploma of Paris University, but his teacher Bloch advised him against it. Professor Bloch said that one Doctor's degree was enough, two would only belittle both. Sunitibabu was greatly benefited by his sojourn in Paris. He had the chance of attending lectures of Antoine Meillet, the greatest name in the field of linguistics at the time who was then engaged in his researches in Indo-European prosody. Among other masters whose lectures Chatterji had the chance to attend in Paris was Jean Przyluski who had done pioneer work in non-Indo-European linguistics. In September 1922 Sunitibabu returned home after fully qualifying himself as a master in Phonetics and Indian Linguistics.

A few months before his return home, Calcutta University had received an endowment of five lacs of rupees from Guruprasad Singh, the Raja of Khaira in Behar. Asutosh Mukherji, who was then the Vice-Chancellor established on the endowment some chairs in Science and Arts, one of which was the chair in Phonetics. Sunitibabu had been appointed to the chair before he returned to Calcutta. He joined the University in October 1922 as one of the youngest University Professors.

At that time the term of appointment of University professors (whose salary came from the Government or from Endowments) was for five years which could be extended further by terms of five years. The University lecturers were then appointed from year to year as their salary depended on the annual grant to the University voted annually by the legislature. The Minister of Education at that time belonged to the opponent group which had not liked the establishment of the Post-graduate department which they thought to be a move for degrading their alma mater Presidency College. It was during the Vice-Chancellorship of Justice Edward Greaves that the term of appointment of teachers was made by terms of five years and the professors were made permanent after the probationary period of the first five years. Sunitibabu was therefore made permanent at the end of his first term of five years. There is one incident which is interesting and I do not think it is to be found in any official record of the University except the files which I am afraid may not be available. The University

no doubt at the instance of Lord Hardinge, the Chancellor—had bestowed an honorary doctoral degree on Rabindranath Tagore on the eve of the award of the Nobel Prize, but Tagore still continued to be a *persona nongrata* to many of the members of the University. When the M. A. course in Bengali was introduced (1919) the University consulted most of the eminent literary men except Rabindranath Tagore. He was not yet accepted by the University as the best of Bengali poets and writers. But a change was noticed from 1921 when Asutosh Mukherji tried to bring Tagore in close touch with the University. Tagore was awarded the newly endowed Bhuvanmohini Medal (1921); he was asked to deliver some readership lectures; and his name was included among the permanent members of the Board of Management of the Khaira Endowment. At the meeting of the Board of Management of the Khaira Endowment when Sunitibabu's term of appointment came up for extension, Rabindranath Tagore was present. Sunitibabu was made permanent. (I saw Tagore come out of the Syndicate Room after the meeting. Later I had confirmation from Sunitibabu.) This is to my knowledge the only occasion when Tagore took part in any official business of the University except delivering the Convocation Address in 1937.

Sunitibabu as a University Professor began to hold classes from the end of October or beginning of November 1922 when the post-puja term began. At first he held classes in Comparative philology, English (Group B), Sanskrit, Pali, Bengali and other vernaculars that were taught for the M.A. degree. Towards the later part of his days at the University, he held classes in Persian, French and Islamic History and Culture also. Besides he took the Phonetic classes for the Certificate and Diploma courses that were held in the evening. As a Professor and head of a department he could take as few as four periods a week only. Instead he held more than twelve. This is unthinkable now in the days when professors are by no means rare birds in a University.

Fortunately Sunitibabu had persuaded Asutosh Mukherji to undertake the publication of his doctoral thesis from the University. It was a costly affair and its printing took about two years. Chatterji's *Magnum Opus Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* was published in two fat volumes in 1926. The price was ridiculously low—Rupees Twenty only and only 500 copies were printed. The result was that neither Sunitibabu nor the University did derive any financial benefit from it. (But the second-hand booksellers collected rich harvest until very recently. In the sixties a copy of ODBL would easily fetch ten

times its original price.) But both the author and the University were more than compensated for the financial loss. The work established the fame of the author in Europe and America as a top-ranking linguist and the name of the University as a real centre of advanced studies in the subject. *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* had, as its core, the doctoral thesis submitted to London University, but what came out of the press was a cyclopaedia of Indo-Aryan linguistics which contains in essence almost all that had been done on the subject as well as Chatterji's own contribution to it. The book has been accepted as the most authoritative text-book in the subject and it has directed since all the fruitful attempts done towards the historical survey and analysis of Indo-Aryan modern languages other than Bengali. Sunitibabu wrote his *magnum opus* after the lines indicated in Jules Bloch's *Formation de la langue Marathe* (1915 ?); he did not merely produce a 'Formation of the Bengali Language' but an historical grammar of the Bengali language imbedded in an Outline of Comparative Grammar of Indo-Aryan. It was therefore not a single book but a group of many. For the student of the history of Indo-Aryan language Chatterji's *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* is indispensable.

His special contributions to Indo-Aryan linguistics were the following :

1. He gave a complete analysis and description of the phonemes of Bengali (Standard Colloquial).
2. He worked out the phonemic structure of the language throughout his history.
3. He gave good etymology for some important Bengali and other Indo-Aryan words.
4. He presented a scientific analysis of the morphology of the Bengali language.
5. He has thrown brilliant side-lights on some of the phonetic and morphemic characteristics of Indo-Aryan languages other than Bengali.
6. Chatterji was a master phonetician.

After the publication of his *magnum opus* Sunitibabu practically discarded researching into the Bengali language and his only subsequent contribution in this field was his Bengali Grammar (in Bengali) which was written as a text-book and published by the University (1939). It is true that his teaching commitments were heavy but that need not have stopped his research activities. But with his growing reputation as a

versatile scholar he found himself involved in various cultural activities and there was little time for concentrated research activity. It is highly regrettable that the author of the *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* produced only half a dozen books and pamphlets of some importance—he of course published many scores of interesting papers on linguistic and cultural topics. Among his significant contributions are *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, a very useful text book, his lectures on the Rajasthani Language, and *Kiratajanakriti*, an illuminating book on the contribution of the Non-Indo-European Kirata people to the overall culture of India.

As a teacher Sunitibabu was conscientious and dutiful, but the general run of his pupils (in two generations) did get little benefit from his lectures as they lacked the minimum enthusiasm for the subject because of their lack of basic knowledge in the languages or languages they read. Of course a few benefited from the lectures and that was perhaps enough.

Sunitibabu was popular among his colleagues. His simple and easy manners, unostentatious behaviour and the native dress went a long way to increase and sustain his popularity. The authorities of the University however generally fought shy of him. He was nominated a member of the Senate only for one term (when Jadunath Sarkar was the Vice-Chancellor) but he was dropped in the next term. The powers that controlled the University recognized his erudition but did not like to share power with him.

Rabindranath Tagore was attracted to Sunitibabu for his erudition, culture and simplicity and Tagore's friendship uplifted his cultural and artistic conceptions and thoughts. Tagore often consulted him when there was any doubt in any linguistic matter. (It may not be known to many that Tagore was the only Bengali [i.e. non-European] who had made definite contribution to Bengali linguistics, tackling problems that had escaped the notice of scholars before him.) Tagore asked him to join his party when he visited Indonesia and Siam (1926). Tagore's companionship during the tour greatly benefited Sunitibabu. It blossomed up the literary talent that was lying dormant in him.

Sunitibabu was a good writer of Bengali. He had a style of his own. The literary master that influenced him at first was Pramatha Chaudhuri, a great stylist in Bengali. Sunitibabu attended the *salon* of Mr and Mrs Chaudhuri and his first significant essay in Bengali was published in Chaudhuri's journal, the unique *Sabuj-patra*. Since the

publication of *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* he wrote many articles in Bengali (and also in English) on topics connected with language, literature and culture. Although excellent articles, the language of these papers did not reveal that Sunitibabu had in him the essentials of a literary artist. When he published his *Dvipamay Bharat*, a travelogue that was more than a travelogue based on his tour of Indonesia and Siam in the entourage of Tagore, he was hailed as a good writer of Bengali by Tagore himself. Tagore also thought that Sunitibabu had in him the making of a true novelist. His subsequent travelogues—*Europe* (1938) and others—as well as his autobiographical sketch-books *Path-Calti* (2 Vols.) justify his claim to be recognised as a stylist in the Bengali language. Sunitibabu loved the visual art—sculpture and painting—more than the contemplative literature. His artistic taste was not confined to the Indian and the European only. He was to my knowledge one of the greatest admirers of native African art. His collection of books on art is one of the best in Calcutta, private or public.

Sunitibabu resigned from the University to join the Upper House of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly as its president (1952-1965). There he was for about a dozen years. But he did not give up his real profession—teaching—altogether. Whenever he could he attended as a faculty member the Summer Schools of Linguistics that were held in Poona, Mysore, Coimbatore and other places (1953-1960). Before he had left the services of the University he had attended several sessions of International Conferences in Linguistics, Phonetics and Indology in Europe and America. He was a widely travelled man and he liked travelling.

It the middle sixties there came a happy release from the halter of politics which he did neither understand nor care for. He was appointed in 1965 a National Professor and he chose the happiest name for his chair—National Professor in Humanities. A few years ago he had been elected the President of the International Phonetic Association where he succeeded his teacher, the great Daniel Jones. It is a matter of deep satisfaction that he died at the age of 87 in treble harness, as a National Professor, as the chairman of Sahitya Akademi and as the President of the International Phonetic Association. What more is desirable for a man of action and thought?

Sunitibabu was an institution by himself. Like a banyan tree he did extend the shade of his erudition and good nature and thereby bringing satisfaction to many. He died at the ripe age but he could have

continued to live actively for half a dozen years or more. To many of us the sudden demise of Sunitibabu is as unexpectedly tragic as the uprooting of a banian tree in a spell of cyclone.

Sunitibabu loved life, the life that was easy and free, warm and harmonious. He was not a religious man as we understand by the term, but he did not spurn the religious ideas which were to him a part of his inheritance as a man and as an Indian. He had firm faith in the power or the Principle that guides Life through eternity. He was a simple man and it is from simple men that saints emerge.

## THE HELLENISM OF AN INDIAN HUMANIST\*

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ANIL KUMAR KANJILAL

AN INTERNATIONALIST and a humanist, like Rabindranath Tagore, Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji has been a Philhellenist since his early manhood. His philhellenism is not something apart from, but an organic part of, and derives from, his humanism, which is universal. This universal humanism he imbibed in his college days from his acquaintance, on the one hand, with the literature of ancient India in Sanskrit and, on the other, with the literatures of ancient and modern Europe mainly through the medium of English. It was subsequently fostered by his intimate association with Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest exponent in the modern world of Universal Religion of Man.

Yes, Professor Chatterji's humanism is universal, it admits of no discrimination between colours and races, castes or creeds ; it refuses to acquiesce in the incompatibility of the fundamentals of human cultures evolved by human beings of diverse races and faiths in the course of their struggles throughout the ages in different lands and in different milieus for a better human environment, a better and higher human life, a finer aesthetic sensibility and a superior spiritual consciousness. Professor Chatterji views human civilisation as a single integral whole, and he has a genuine faith in and feeling for Universal Humanity. Because of this he evinces deep interest in all peoples, ancient and modern, and in all cultures and religions. He has always been an ardent believer in 'Unity in Diversities,' and his life's mission has been since his college days to seek for this Unity in the sum total of human experiences acquired by diverse peoples at different times in different lands and handed down in different forms as a common legacy for Modern Man, jointly to share, to conserve and to enrich. This faith in 'Unity in Diversities'—this catholicity of outlook and interests—is a reflex of the spirit of ancient Indian philosophy of the Vedanta, and is linked with Taoism, with ancient Greek and modern European humanism, with esoteric Hebraism, and with Islamic *Taşawwuf* or Sufism.

\* Written in September 1974.

His interest in foreign peoples and cultures, and his genuine love for Man took him, as an enthusiastic pilgrim, to distant lands : to Mexico and West Africa, to Mongolia and Indonesia, to Egypt and China, to Russia and the Baltic Lands, to the West Indies and the Caucasus region, to Ethiopia and Scandinavia, and of course, to Greece. He visited Greece for the first time in 1922, as a student, and described in a short letter in Bengali (published the same year in the celebrated Bengali literary journal the *Sabuj Patra* or 'the Green Leaf,' edited by the eminent critic and man of letters, Pramatha Chaudhuri) his joyful experiences of the journey he undertook from Athens to Sparta (through the Corinthian Canal by steamer to Itea and Delphi by carriage, and then on horseback down to the sea, crossing the Gulf of Corinth to Patras, and then by train to Olympia ; and from Olympia on pony to the village of Zevgholation where he took his train to Sparta). This is the earliest reference to Greece to be noticed in the vast extent of Professor Chatterji's writings spreading over half a century of active literary life. Since then he has paid several visits to Greece—in 1966, 1967, and 1974—and on every occasion he spent hours among the ruins of the Acropolis in Athens, and in other places, and these were, as he emphatically declares, "hours of exaltation and ecstasy" for him—to be roaming among the ruins of the Parthenon, only where, according to Ernest Renan, one can see artistic perfection. Professor Chatterji is equally moved by the ancient and medieval Indian achievements, as in Bharhut and Sanchi, Amaravati and Nagarjuni-konda, Mahabalipuram and Ellora and Elephanta, as well as by Chinese Buddhist rock sculptures at Yun Kang and Lung Men, besides Borobudur and Prambanan of Java : and Chinese palaces in Peking, Nanking, Suchow, Hankow and Canton, and Japanese Shinto Shrines at Gegu and Naigu ; and of course by the little that he could see of ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian art and sculpture in the various museums of Europe. He also visited the ancient Aztec and Maya and other art and architecture in Mexico—Tenochtitlan, Teotihuacan, Mitla, Tehuantepec, Uxmal and in other places in Yucatan. The cathedrals of Europe—Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Russian, as well as the great mosques of India, Iran, Istanbul and Egypt were another source of perennial joy for him.

Professor Chatterji has made the great culture of the ancient Greeks almost a part of his intellectual and spiritual being. In this he partly received his inspiration from his teacher Professor Manmohan Ghosh, who was an enthusiastic Hellenist (see Professor Chatterji's English Paper "My Teachers—Homage to their Memory" in the *Educational*



*Quarterly*, Ministry of Education, Government of India, September 1966, pp.6-15). Professor Chatterji has always been an admirer of Greek literature and art as well as of Greek thought. For well over thirty years (1922-52), he regularly taught at the post-graduate level in the University of Calcutta, Homeric and Classical Greek, side by side with other sister classical Indo-European languages, like Vedic, Pali, Pahlavi, Gothic, Old English etc. He became further interested in the Baltic languages (see his book *Balts and Aryans : in their Indo-European Background*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, India, 1968), and also in Armenian and Old Celtic. Among the ten 'Literary Complexes,' which Professor Chatterji considers to be fundamentally the most important and greatest creations of humanity, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the Homeric hymns, the Homeric epics, the works of Hesiod, and Greek tragedies form, according to him, one single complex (see his *World Literature and Tagore*, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India, 1971, pp. 56-62).

Professor Chatterji has named his residential house, built in 1933, *Sudharmā*. This, in Sanskrit, means the special heaven where all the gods and goddesses, sages and saints assemble. It is what would be known as *Pantheon* in Greek. Here, in this house, along with a fairly big collection of books (over 30,000 volumes) on Indian and Greek as well as other ancient literatures, one can see also a veritable assemblage of the deities and heroes and heroines and personalities of ancient Greece and India. It is as if the immortal divinities have found their last sanctuary on the second floor of Professor Chatterji's house after their "glorious dwellings" have fallen and their heavenly preoccupations gone. It often happens that a pupil or a friend of his or a chance visitor to the *Sudharmā*, finds the young Professor of 85 occupied with narrating to a stranger in the presence of the immortal deities the wonderful stories of their rise and fall, their romance and tragedy, and their relations with Man—all their marvels and miracles, in words that almost bring the dead back to life, and at the end of his narration, reciting the words of the Last Oracle at Delphi—

cipate tō(i) basilēi, khamai pede daidales aula.  
ouketi Phoibos ekhei kaluban, ou mantida daphnēn.  
ou pagan laleousan. apesbeto kai lalon hudōr.

Professor Chatterji's love and admiration for ancient Greece has been an absorbing passion with him. In his review (published in the Bengali Monthly *Prabāsi*, 1923, pp. 646-49) of a big book in Bengali on

*Socrates* by a senior colleague of his in Calcutta University, Professor Rajani Kanta Guha, Professor Chatterji has stated that if he were given an option to be reborn, he would select, outside of India, only one country, and that is ancient Greece—the city of Athens of the fifth century B. C. While describing the different ways of thought and different ways of life evolved by different peoples in different parts of the world in the course of the history of human civilisation, Professor Chatterji thus interprets his concept of *Hellenism* i.e. *the Way of Life and Way of Thought* which is specifically Greek :

“This Hellenism expresses itself in the following matters. The Hellenes or the Greeks of antiquity, in the consciousness of us moderns, were a people who were actuated by a unique sense of beauty in connexion with whatever came within their purview ; and in their gymnasiums, and emulating also the ancient Egyptians, they studied the human body and were particularly moved by the beauty of the human form. The ancient Indians (and following them other peoples in Asia who came within the orbit of Indian Civilisation like the Indonesians) had also a similar feeling of interest, with an austere or a luxuriant approach, in the body of men and women. Herein the Greek sense however was supreme. Not only did they see the beauty of man’s and woman’s body, and were sort of intoxicated with it and represented it to perfection in their sculpture and other art, but they also wanted equally to make the surroundings of the body beautiful. Greek sculpture and architecture, Greek painting as on their vases, Greek coins, and all other Greek art small or great bear the stamp of a desire to realise a transcendent beauty ; and this was the Greek’s great contribution to life. Even the common things of life which would be ignored by other peoples, for example the drapery with which they adorned their human figures in sculpture, had a supreme beauty and truth. There was a sense of perfect order and balance combined with sensitive beauty ; and there was a ‘high seriousness’ combined with a deep mysticism, with a restraint and reticence rather than exuberance and abandon, which we find in both Greek art and literature. The ancient Greeks were for moderation—for ‘nothing too much’—and it was against their nature to go to extremes and indulge in exaggeration. In Greek art there is no lack of power to

portray the grotesque and the unnatural. But there was no particular obsession for these with the Greeks. The Greeks, again, had very great love for freedom, and they had a very sane sense of human values, and this found expression in their democratic attitude and their political institutions. This, however, was contradicted by the ancient Greeks permitting the institution of slavery to flourish. But as contrasted with the Romans and many other peoples, the Greek treatment of their slaves was eminently reasonable and humane, and they could also fully appreciate the humaneness of the ancient Indian attitude to slavery. Social well-being of man in his corporate existence was another great ideal of the Greeks, and this made the Greeks the first thinkers in political science, side by side with the ancient Indians—with this difference, however, that the Greeks looked at politics from the point of view of democracy and the ancient Indian political theorists and thinkers (like Kāuṭilya) expressed the standpoint of a benevolent despotism with full consideration of the happiness of the people. The Greeks were inspired by both awe and curiosity in their approach to Nature. While the first led to the development of Greek Philosophy, the second was the foundation of Greek Science; and Greek Science is of course the basis of modern science. The Greeks were also very *interested in Man as Man*, and they felt a very great curiosity and a deep interest in Man, just because he was their brother man.

“The Greek approach to Man was simple and direct, and rather different from the philosophical approach which is the basis of Indian Humanism. According to the Indian point of view, man should be interested in man since the other man is his *alter ego*, his other soul. Every human soul or personality is a part of the expression of the Supreme Spirit, and therefore all individuals are part of the same whole : *yatra jīvas, tatra Śivaḥ* : ‘wherever there is life, there is the Supreme’. So man’s interest in man is a part of the realisation of his proper self, in the Indian approach. When in the 17th century the English thinker put the question : ‘For whom the Bell tolls ?’ and gave his reply to it, his idea was in accordance with the Indian one : no man is an island

unto himself—individual men are but parts of one great continent of All-Man, and therefore when one dies or suffers, all others are also affected.

“This interest in man among the Greeks was responsible for giving to civilised humanity one of its great inheritances, that of *Humanism*, its *Sense of Humanity*. The Greeks called this attitude of interest and sympathy for man *Anthrōpotēs*, and the Romans translated this word into Latin as *Humanitas*; and with the lead of Rabindranath and other thinkers of India, this has been translated into Sanskrit as *Mānavikatā*. This in the first instance is based on a sense of Oneness of Man-kind; and although the Greeks, considering the age, were pardonably conscious of their own superiority in many matters when they looked at other peoples, and had an understandable pride of race, (regarding all other peoples, howsoever civilised or advanced, as *Barbarians*, people whose language and ways they did not understand), yet they were eager to learn from everyone and to benefit by their contacts. They always acknowledged that they were a young people, and consequently were the inheritors of what the older peoples had left behind them. Finally, the Greeks had a deep sense of the Ultimate Reality which we see in their thinkers, when during the first millennium before Christ the Greek Philosophers were first groping in their attempts to interpret the riddle of life; and specially from the second half of this millennium, philosophers like Socrates and Plato, Epictetus and others tried to give a rational interpretation of existence, and chalked out what they considered to be the civilised man's way of thought and behaviour. All these notions and ideas which were cultivated by the Greeks and attempted to be put into practice in their life are brought together within the epithet of *Hellenism*. It is not that these ideas were the exclusive possession of the ancient Greeks alone—civilised men everywhere would agree with them and accept them. But the ancient Greeks, as a people, affected these ideas in their lives, and they doubly underlined them, so to say, in their culture. That is why we call these ideals in their sum-total *Hellenism*.” (See *Indianism and the Indian Synthesis*, Calcutta University, 1962, pp. 41-44; also *Africanism: The African Personality*, Bengal Publishers,

Calcutta, 1960, pp. 30ff. ; as well as the papers 'The Basic Unity underlying the Diversity of Culture', published in the *Inter-relations of Culture*, UNESCO, 1953, pp. 158-83, and 'National Cultures and National Attitudes to the World', published in *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* (New Series), Vols. 31 and 32, 1956 and 1957, First Edition 1959, pp. 20-37).

To Professor Chatterji this *Hellenism*, as a distinctive product of the Human Mind within the Hellenic environment, is, in essence, quite compatible with *Indianism* or *Bhārata-dharma*, which is a distinctive product of the same Human Mind within the Indian environment, the two together forming a harmonious whole. Professor Chatterji compares the elusive *Urvaśī* of Vedic mythology with the fatal *Cytherea* of Greek myths, and his unerring insight reveals to him the basic identity of *Urvaśī* as re-conceived by Rabindranath in his celebrated Bengali hymn *Urvaśī* and *Aphroditē* as conceived by Sophocles and Euripides (See the Bengali paper 'Rabindranāthēr Jivana-Dēvatā' first published 1949, revised and reprinted in the first volume of *Sāṃskṛtikī*, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 215-34, and again in the *Manīsī Smaraṇē*, Jijñāsa, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 95-111). An Indian student of aesthetics cannot but wonder at the revelation of the affinity between the concepts of Supreme Love and Beauty of the great poets of ancient Hellas and the greatest poet of modern India, when Professor Chatterji quotes the words of the Greek poets in English translation :

My children, of a surety Cypris is  
 Not Cypris only, but bears many a name :  
 Death is her name, and Night imperishable,  
 And maniac Frenzy, and unallayed Desire,  
 And Lamentation loud. All is in her :  
 Impulse, and Quietude, and Energy ;  
 For in the bosoms of all souls that breathe  
 This Goddess is installed. Who is not prey  
 For her ? She penetrates the watery tribe  
 Of fishes ; she is in the four-legged breed  
 Of the dry land : in birds her wing bears sway,  
 In brutes, in mortals, in the Gods on high...  
 ...without spear,  
 Without a sword, Cypris cuts short all counsels  
 Both human and divine.

(From Sophocles, translated by Sir George Young)

She ranges with the stars of eve and morn,  
 She wanders in the heaving of the sea,  
 And all life lives from her—Aye, this is she  
 That sows Love's seed and brings Love's fruit to birth ;  
 And great Love's brethern are all we on earth !  
 (From Euripides, translated by Gilbert Murray)

In short prefaces to the two Bengali books by Mohini Mohan Mukherji—*Īskāilās* (1948) and *Sōphōklēs* (1949)—Professor Chatterji records his appreciation of the greatness of poetic genius of the two stalwarts of ancient Greece. In these days of negation of all values and faiths and collapse of all hope in man's future, Professor Chatterji derives mental peace and solace from the benign message enshrined in the great words of ancient Greek Masters, which he is happy to find to be in perfect harmony with the universal message of Love and Beauty and Truth pronounced by the ancient poets and sages of India in a divine language kindred to that of ancient Hellas viz. the speech of the Vedas of India. In a Bengali article (*Griḱ Kavi Euripidēs-ēr duiṭi Vāṇī* printed in the monthly *Udbōdhan*, 1941, pp. 535-38) he quotes two such messages from Euripides—one from *Hippolutos Stephanēphoros* and the other from *Trōiades*—and explains their great beauty and significance, and their validity even for modern man whose emotions have almost dried up and who is spiritually famished and is in need of mental and moral sustenance to be able to survive as Man.

hē mega moi ta theōn meledēmāth'  
 hotan phrenas elthē(i),  
 lupas parairei.  
 ksunesin de tin' elpidi keuthōn  
 leipomai en te tukhais thnatōn kai en ergmasi leussōn.  
 (Hippolutos)

\* \* \*  
 ō gēs okhēma, k'api gēs ekhōn hedran,  
 hostis pot' ei su, dustopastos eidenai :  
 Zeus, eit' Anagkē phuseos, eite Nous brotōn—  
 prosēuksamēn se panta gar di' apsophou  
 bainōn keleuthou kata Dikēn ta thnēt' ageis. (Trōiades)

Professor Chatterji discovers his kindred spirit in Euripides, the most modern poet of ancient Greece, whose poetry reveals to him, in artistic image of superb beauty, an intellectual attitude, and a commentary

on Life, which he can accept as his own. In the words of the Chorus of Dionysiac Maenads in the *Bakkhai* (1005 ff.), which he quotes in his *World Literature and Tagore* (p. 14), Professor Chatterji reads a great message—a message that offers a positive meaning, a tangible aim of Human Life, the *Summum Bonum*, which a sane man with a sense of the Ultimate Reality in him can hopefully accept and faithfully adhere to :

to sophon ou phthonō(i)  
 khairō thēreuōusa,  
 ta d'hetera, megala phanera t'ont' aei ;  
 epi ta kala bion  
 emar eis nukta t'euagount' eusebein,  
 ta d'eksō nomima dikas ekbalon-  
 ta timan theous.

Professor Chatterji, without being a scholar of Greek, appreciates a quotation from the Greek alright, and even at 85 he enjoys reciting from memory—which has never failed him—his favourite lines from the Greek in the Roman script in his own hand and bound up into a neat volume, that he keeps by his bedside for ready use and carries with him while on tour. Professor Chatterji delivered, some years back, a course of lectures in Bengali on Greek sculpture, which has not yet been published in book form, but is preserved in its draft covering more than 60 pages. This he intends to take up soon and develop into a monograph, a fair copy having already been prepared under his direct supervision. When completed and published, it will be a unique contribution of Indian scholarship, first of its kind, to the study of Greek Art from the Indian point of view. The motto of his life Professor Chatterji has got inscribed on a wall of a room in the ground-floor of his house : it is a quotation from Terence—

*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto—*  
 which is an echo in Latin of Menander's Greek—  
*Oudeis esti moi allotrios, . hē phustis mia pantōn*  
 which, again, is a variant of the Sanskrit  
*Udāra-caritānām tu, Vasudhāiva Kuṭumbakam—*

“For those who are of a broad way of life, the whole world is Kin”.

## A MANY-SPLENDoured PERSONALITY

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DEVIDAS SEN

### I

IMAGINE an unorthodox Bengali Brahmin—free from pride and prejudice—permitting nobody to touch his feet in reverence, though himself always modest, even deferential, while talking even to his youngest pupil ; one caring as much for brawn as for brains ; strong and agile, with a sound mind in a sound body at eighty-seven ; tolerant but not timorous ; an Indian to the core and yet a citizen of the world ; moving as freely in the world of action as in the world of thought ; feeling equally at home in the library and the Legislative Council, an international conference and a third class compartment in a railway train ; one with original views on so many subjects, but never trying to impose them on others ; one who knows no compromise with untruth, and—*exemplifying his own precept*—“never walks when he can run, never stands when he can walk, never sits when he can stand, never lies down when he can sit” ; a great lover who loves *all* beautiful things ; a perfect gentleman who never inflicts pain, or gets fussy when making a gift !

Such was Suniti Kumar Chatterji, teacher, polymath, researcher, thinker, author, traveller, polyglot, conversationalist—and what not, but above all, a man, of whom it would certainly not be an exaggeration to say, in the words of Horatio, we “shall not look upon his like again.” To know him was itself liberal education.

Rich in qualities of the *head*, Dr Chatterji was perhaps richer in qualities of the *heart*. His life teems with instances of large-heartedness and generosity : (a) Was a young enthusiast badly in need of a book or a curio ? Well, Professor Chatterji at once made a gift of it to him. (b) Did a post-graduate student, occupying a front seat in the class-room, had before him, with pages wide open, a second-hand copy of Wright's *Old English Grammar*, duly purchased, at an incredibly low price, from one of the bookstalls in College Street, with little knowledge that it had been filched from his professor ? Dr Chatterji had an amused look at the volume, explained the whole ‘episode’ and—much to the embarrassment



of the student, of course—refused to deprive him of the bargain. (c) Was a hapless, abducted girl, rescued from Noākhāli and brought over to Calcutta, to be settled down to married life? The Brahmin professor at once volunteered his services as a priest at the wedding. (d) Even a servant's illness would so upset him that he would personally look after him. (e) Testimonials from his pen were never of the common sort which—to use Pope's well-known expression—"damn with faint praise."

## II

It is no light or easy task to talk on so eminent and so many splendoured a personality as Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, whom I had known ever since 1938,—first as my teacher, then as colleague, and later as adviser and guide. To the layman Dr Chatterji was perhaps best known for two things—his passion for language and linguistics and his epicurean relish for good food. As for his *liking for titbits*, all that need be said is that his hospitality outdid his relish for good food, both being part of something much wider—namely, his enjoyment of all that is good and beautiful in life. As for his *passion for language*, that he was first and foremost an outstanding language scholar is beyond question, but when one has said this about him, one has not said enough. For if language was his abiding passion, so too was art. And he had so many other interests as well—history and sociology, philosophy and religion, archaeology and anthropology, literature and culture, manners and morals, legends and customs, folk songs and ballads, music and the theatre,—and what not! Indeed the range or extent of his knowledge was as amazing as its depth or intensity. And all this vast and varied scholarship never became a dead weight with him; rather, it radiated life and charm in a manner rarely to be found in our tribe.

Our professor had an unfailing sense of humour and a gift for felicitous coinage. In him genius and geniality of temperament went hand in hand, as did plain living and high thinking, fearlessness and humility, enthusiasm and sobriety.

He was a wonderful talker—roaming freely over an infinite variety of topics, ranging from architecture to intonation, from orthography to Africanism, from sculpture to idioms, from an antique custom to a modern fad, from sartorial fashions in the reign of Chandragupta

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to the art of cooking in Mexico ! And with all his passion for detail, he never lost the wood in the trees.

If his conversation was at once feast of reason and flow of soul, so too were his letters. His gift for letter-writing is perhaps not known to many. What particularly strikes us in his letters is his capacity for breathing life into the pettiest detail—which, of course, sprang directly from his humanism. Nothing was trivial to him. No wonder that Tagore paid a glowing tribute to Dr Chatterji as a letter-writer : “The title of *lipi-vāchaspati* or *lipi-sārvabhūma* or *lipi-chakravarti* should be conferred on Suniti.”

As a teacher, Dr Chatterji seldom confined himself to the bare text, but enlivened his lectures with anecdotes and with observations on this and that and the other, and leavened even the most abstruse matter with wit and humour, inspiring his students with the same lust for knowledge, the same avidity for experience, the same zest for life that had been his. A marked feature of his character was his encouragement of young learners and researchers in any branch of study.

As an examiner, Professor Chatterji was never niggardly in awarding marks ; indeed, he was a shining illustration of the saying—so widely current among students—that a teacher who himself secured very high marks seldom undervalues a really good answer-script when he becomes an examiner.

His prodigious memory, which became the envy of many, remained unimpaired at eighty-seven. It was an unforgettable experience to listen to him reciting from Homer or the Koran in the original—long after he had passed the biblical “three-score years and ten.”

He had an acute power of observation. Nothing escaped his keen eyes or his ears that were ever alert. In fact, I have always felt that his real and ultimate subject was neither linguistics nor art, but humanity. It is quite in the fitness of things that among his favourite lines were the well-known ones of Terence : “*homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto.*” (“I am a man ; nothing that concerns man do I consider alien, i.e., a matter of insignificance, to me”) The words of Terence might well have come from his own lips. Dr Chatterji was a *humanist* to the core—a humanist not merely in the sense current in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but in the broadest sense of the term.

## III

Among the languages and dialects mastered by Professor Chatterji were Greek, Latin, Classical Sanskrit, Vedic Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, Hindi, Arabic, Old Persian, Zend, Gothic, Old and Middle English, Old Irish, Pushtu, not to speak of an equally large number of languages and dialects of which he had working knowledge. Unlike another polyglot, Harinath De, Professor Chatterji had the unique distinction of not only mastering so many languages, but probing into their origin and early history and later development as well. Moreover, he felt, and sought to establish, a certain unity in languages in the midst of diversity.

Dr Chatterji had travelled so extensively all over the world that what to a student of, say, Indo-European linguistics are generally mere names of language-branches or races became for him live realities. To him travel was literally a part of education.

His minute and careful study of the cultural affinities among widely different nations is not less remarkable than his linguistic researches. Dr Chatterji believed in the integration of different races through culture.

## IV

A complete bibliography of Professor Chatterji's writings in English, Bengali, Hindi and other languages—is yet to be made. To his major works (numbering nearly seventy) and his articles, reviews and prefaces (well over a thousand) must be added the texts and documents he edited in collaboration with others and, last but not least, some three hundred delightful “ślōkas” composed by him in various metres in Sanskrit.

The *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* (with a foreword by Grierson)—published in two volumes by the University of Calcutta in 1926 (when its author was only thirty-six) and later in three volumes by George Allen and Unwin, London, 1970-72, and recently in an American edition—is a monumental achievement and the initials O.D.B.L. have become as familiar to-day as C.H.E.L. or O.E.D.

Until recently, *Samskrit Śilpa Itihās* was the professor's last published work. The unfinished *Jeevan-kathā*, which appeared recently in *Sāradya Yugantar* (1977), is a posthumous publication.

Dr Chatterji's writings reveal not only a versatile mind, but a rare gift of style that helped him at once to instruct and to delight. Languages

and linguistic problems were never his sole concern ; he wrote, too, on racial and cultural intermixture, national integration, Indianism and the Indian synthesis, cosmopolitanism, the history and civilisation of India, medieval and modern Indian literature, Islamic mysticism, Indian music, and world literature. Tansen and Tulsidas, Jayadeva and Tagore, painting and sculpture, the stage and the museum, *Purāna* and *Jātaka* engaged his attention as much as the scientific and technical terms in modern Indian languages, the alphabet—Devanāgarī, Urdu and Roman, Iranianism, dress in India, Hinduism, Armenian Hero-Legends, and the African personality. There are scholarly treatises as well as primers, research papers as well as *belles-lettres*. If some of his writings are best appreciated by the thinker and the specialist, there are works—particularly among those written in the vernacular—that appeal immensely to the layman and the common reader.

## V

No talk on Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji is complete without a word or two about Tagore's influence on him. Called 'Bhāshāchārya' by the poet (in his Dedication to *Bānglā Bhāṣā Parichay*) and honoured with the title 'Deśikōttama' by the Visvabhārati University, the professor was closely associated with Rabindranath and his Santiniketan. It was in company with the poet that he visited Malay, Sumatra, Java, Bali and Siam, a year after the publication of the O.D.B.L. The fruit of his travels was *Dwīpamoy Bhārat*, later published with the changed title *Rabindra-saṃgamé Dwīpamoy Bhārat O Stamdesh*. Apart from his talk on the poet's ideas and ideals in the South East Asian tour, and the essays here and there on various aspects of Tagore, later collected in *Manīshī-smarané*, we have, among Dr Chatterji's writings, *Rabindranath Tagore* (3 lectures, 1963) and *World Literature and Tagore* (1971), and his monograph, yet to be published, on Rabindranath's 'Jeevan Devatā.'

Tagore set a high value on Professor Chatterji's genius and it is delightful to find Amit Ray, the unconventional hero of *Śeṣer Kavītā*, reading Professor Chatterji's "Bhāshātatwa" in a trip to Shillong.

Dr Chatterji was not only proud of Tagore's affection for him, but was deeply devoted to the poet, some of whose lines—in the poet's own handwriting—decorated the walls of his bedroom. The lines, which baffle translation, are :

“nitya tōmāy citta bhariyā smaran kari,  
vishwaviheen vijanē bāsiyā varan kari.  
Tumi āchhō mōr jeevan maran haran kari”

Could any other words so appropriately convey Professor Chatterji's deep love and respect for the poet? For it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that his relation to Tagore was not far removed from the poet's relation to his 'Jeevan-Devatā'. It is quite in the fitness of things that the professor wished *Rabindra-samgeet* to be sung at his 'srādh' rituals instead of the traditional *Kirtan*.

## VI

In the last phase of his life Professor Chatterji was unfortunately drawn into a controversy about his alleged views on the origin of the *Rāmāyana*. It is a pity that his researches into this Indian epic which engaged him till the day of his death could not be completed. Among other works which he intended to write, or could not finish (or publish), are an Autobiography, Greek Art, the Krishna Legend and a monograph on Rabindranath's *Jeevan Devatā*. His mind retained its vigour and freshness, his ceaseless sprit of inquiry continued unabated even at eighty-seven. Optimistic by temperament, he hoped to complete the things he had planned. But I have a feeling that—deep down in his heart—there was an apprehension that he would not perhaps be able to complete them all. (An astrologer had predicted his death at eighty-seven). “O how much still remains to be done,” the professor once blurted out in his eighty-seventh year, “how much yet to be read.” A lover of the Bible, Dr Chatterji, it seems to me, must have recalled from time to time the Biblical utterance: “Let us work the work of him while it is day, for night cometh when no man can work.”

On the twenty-ninth of May, 1977, at about 4 P. M. our National Professor in Humanities passed away after some three hours' illness.

I cannot bring myself to believe that my beloved teacher, Bhāshā-chārya Suniti Kumar Chatterji is no more. The very thought makes me feel a lump at the throat. Death, however, has not been able to snatch him away from our midst. S. K. C. has found his way into our hearts and there he abides.

## THE HIUNG-NU WORD FOR 'SKY'

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H. W. BAILEY

THE Hiung-nu are reported in Chinese Annals from the end of the 3rd century B.C. Various words are cited of their language and the word for 'sky' is given as *t'ang-liei*, modern pronunciation *tʃ'əŋ-li* that is for a foreign *čang-ri* (older spellings are listed Asia Major 9.241). This word is known in the much later Turkish (700 years later) as *tängri* for both 'sky' and 'god'. In Uigur Turkish it is written *tnkry* for *tängri* without the sign for *-a-* in archaic spelling. From Turkish it came to Mongol where the sign for *-a-* and for *-n-* is different only by a dot, so that *t'kry* was read as *tegrī*.

The Hiung-nu language in the past was claimed to be Turkish. Hence scholars such as G. Ramstedt, L. Bazin and A. von Gabain offered three (different) Turkish readings of the Hiung-nu verse preserved in Chinese script with a Chinese gloss. These attempts were dismissed by F. Pulleyblank<sup>1</sup>. He had decided to trace the Hiung-nu language as an older form of the Ket and Kot languages of the Siberian Ienissei region.<sup>2</sup> Though he cited the syllables of the Hiung-nu verse he did not provide a Ket reading.

However it seems clear that at least some of the Hiung-nu words are a form of Eastern Iranian. This is clear with Hiung-nu *so-t'o* 'boot', older *sakdak*, familiar in the New Persian *saxt-* of *saxtiyān* 'prepared leather' and earlier Parthian *saxtak* epithet of *mōčak* 'footwear' with the addition 'of the nobles', hence a special type of high-class leather boot. The Ket word *sāgdi* 'boot' is from this Iranian word.<sup>3</sup>

Other words quoted as Hiung-nu words can also be traced plausibly to Iranian. Here belongs Hiung-nu *čang-rai*, later Turkish *tängri*. The basic Iranian is *\*čanxaraka-* 'wheel, circle, sky'. This is a nasalized form of *čaxra-* 'wheel', as in Avestan and later *čaxr*, *čarx* 'wheel, sky'. The nasalization is like that in Buddhist Sogdian *wnyr wanxar* 'voice', Christian Sogdian *wxr* *\*waxr* from *vak-* 'to speak'. The suffix *-aka-* in later Iranian passed through *-aga-* to *-aya-* and to *ai-*, *-ē*, *-i*, as in the Ket word *sāgdi* 'boot' just cited. The replacement of initial *č-* by *t-* is found

also within Iranian as *čathru-* 'fourth part', later *tasu-*, New Persian *tasūj*. Similarly the word for 'iron' is in Buddhist Sanskrit *cimara-*, frequent in India as in Khowar *čumur*, and Waigali *čümār*.<sup>4</sup> From this came Turkish *timür*, *tämür*. Similarly the place name Sogdian *čāč*, adjective *čāčānai* has been preserved in the name *Tāš* of Tashkent.

The recognition that Hiung-nu contains words of Iranian origin confirms the connexion of this name Hiung-nu (earlier *hiwong-nuo*, *-nou* and *-nah*) with the ancient Avestan name *Hyaona-* of the time of Vištāspa and Zoroaster, which survived later in the tradition as *Hyon*. It would seem that at an early period the *Hyaona-* had migrated eastwards. The Chinese histories then report that they were driven back by peoples from further east. At about 200 A.D. the Sogdians called them *hun*, the Khotan Saka *huna*, and in India they are *hūṇa-*. In the west the Persian called them *hyōn*, and the Greek has the two name *ounnoi* and *khiōnitai*.<sup>5</sup>

The Chinese spelling *hiung-nu* (for which signs with derogatory meanings were chosen) records a dissyllable in which the *-nu* was earlier *-nah*. Hence the form may transcribe the Iranian plural *Hyaunāh*.

Elsewhere the other Hiung-nu words cited in the article of Asia Major 9, 1962 will be examined. A short paper on some of these words has already been sent to the volume to be dedicated to Professor Heinz Mode in 1978. For the name *Hyaona-* as cognate with Vedic *syonā-*, there is an article in Indo-Celtica, memorial volume to A. Sommerfelt 1972.

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2. Ibid. 242 ff.
3. Cited with my note in Asia Major 9, 243-4.
4. R. L. Turner, Comparative Dictionary of Indo-Aryan, p. 828.
5. In Asiatica, the Fr. Weller Festschrift 1954, the article Harahūpa has many other details.

## THE SYMBOLISM OF 9 IN BABYLONIAN AND HITTITE LITERATURE

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O. R. GURNEY

IN the early years of this century W. H. Roscher compiled a massive monograph on the symbolic significance of the numbers 7 and 9 in the civilisations of Greece and Rome, including incidentally some references to a similar use of these numbers in the literature of India, Persia, Egypt, China, Mexico and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> For ancient Babylonia he was able to adduce a few references supplied to him by H. Zimmern,<sup>2</sup> but at that time the archives of the Hittite kings still lay beneath the soil at Bogazköy.

The special significance of the number 7 to the Babylonians was fully expounded by J. Hehn in 1907.<sup>3</sup> The number 9, however, seems to have played little part in this civilisation as compared either with the prominence of the heptad or with the extensive evidence for the ennead in Greece, Rome, Egypt or India. F. X. Kugler drew attention<sup>4</sup> to the year name for the 45th year of Šulgi—"Year when Simurru and Lulubum were destroyed for the 9th time"—pointing out that only three other destructions are attested and suggesting that the number 9 here has the sense of completeness or finality (a view since accepted by A. Ungnad and E. Weidner<sup>5</sup>). But in support of this usage he was unable to find anything more impressive than a few incantations in the series *Maqlû* consisting of 9 short imprecations. The 9 Anunnaki of the commentary K. 2056+2057 appear nowhere else and the entry is now regarded as some sort of scribal error.<sup>6</sup> The two groups of 9 deities to whom incense burners are set out in the mouth-washing ritual *BBR* 31-37<sup>7</sup> have no coherence and seem to be adventitious; the first consists of the two great triads, Anu, Emlil, Ea, Šin, Shamash, Adad, with the addition of Marduk, Gula and Ninsianna, the second of the Mother-goddess, the High Priest of Enlil, the goddess of incantations and five of the craftsman gods, together with the god whose statue is the object of the ceremony. The number 9 here seems to have no more significance than, for instance, the 4 altars set up in the *namburbi* ritual *Orientalia* 39 (1970), 118, 20.



More recently W. von Soden has pointed out that in the Atra-hasis epic "ninefold" yield is taken to symbolise an abundant harvest and a 9-day celebration is ordained in honour of the Goddess of Birth.<sup>8</sup> In this context the figure may well have special reference to the 9 months of gestation, as von Soden suggests.

It is then all the more striking that the Hittite archives have brought to light a fair number of examples of enneads of various kinds. In the myth "Kingship in heaven" the gods reign in turn for periods of 9 years<sup>9</sup>. 9 seas and 9 rivers are mentioned in contexts which suggest that they may be located in the Underworld.<sup>10</sup> Rituals of various kinds contain references to 9 sacrificial animals, 9 loaves, 9 libations, 9 stews, 9 *kukub* vessels, 9 paths, 9 pits, 9 springs, 9 pegs, 9 fires, 9 *eian* trees, 9 pieces of gravel, 9 combs, 9 torches, 9 draughts from a spring, a ladder with 9 rungs. According to V. Haas, the parts of the body were also sometimes counted as 9; however, the single passage which he quotes for this has an uncertain reading<sup>11</sup> and the normal number is unquestionably 12.

It is difficult to detect a common denominator in all the texts where these figures occur. It is true that in many instances there is some connexion with the Underworld, as pointed out by V. Haas.<sup>12</sup> *IBoT* II 128, in which Ishtar is enjoined to draw water 9 times from a spring and to use only the 9th draught, is part of the ritual for evoking the Anunnaki or Primeval Gods from the Under-world.<sup>13</sup> The 9 paths and 9 pits in *KUB* XV 31 are undoubtedly intended to lure the MAH and Gulses deities up from the Underworld to which they may have departed.<sup>14</sup> In the funerary ritual at several points 9 animals are sacrificed to the Sun-Goddess of the Underworld and the soul of the dead man.<sup>15</sup> In the Karahna ritual *CTH* 681 and the ritual *CTH* 447 the Sun-Goddess of the Underworld receives 9 libations, 9 sheep and 9 loaves.<sup>16</sup> The Luwian ritual *KUB* XXXV 88, which mentions 9 combs, is concerned with the god Antaliya, who apparently belongs to the Underworld.<sup>17</sup> The ritual of Zarpiya, *CTH* 757, is directed against Santas and the Innarawantes gods who, in view of their bloodstained garments etc. and the fact that they have caused a pestilence, may be thought to be chthonic deities.<sup>18</sup> The 9 pegs in *KBo* XVII, 1, *KUB* XII 49 and *VBoT* 111 are probably for the purpose of pegging down the exorcised evil in the Underworld, as in the passage *ZA* 54, 129 from *CTH* 446.<sup>19</sup>

However, there are many exceptions. In *KUB* XV 31 the Underworld is only one of the seven cosmic locations to which the deities may

have departed. Why are there 9 fires, 9 springs, 9 rivers, probably 9 mountains (in a lacuna)? These are unlikely to be all connected with the Underworld, since the seventh location is Heaven. The view that MAH and Gulses deities are themselves chthonic does not seem to be so well substantiated as is commonly supposed.<sup>20</sup> In this ritual, at any rate, their proper place is evidently in the home of the patient on whose behalf the ritual is being conducted.<sup>21</sup> They are his personal genii. KUB VII 60, which is similar to XV 31 in making use of 9 paths, is a ritual for attracting the gods of an enemy city, for whom there is no reason to suspect an Underworld connexion.<sup>22</sup> IBoT III 148, which has a reference to 9 stews (UTÚL) and 9 loaves, is a reverse evocation to move the national gods, Teshub, Hebat, Sharruma *et al.* out of their temples<sup>23</sup> VBoT 24, which has 9 pieces of gravel and 9 foods (*etrl*), is an evocation of the genius of the shield (<sup>4</sup>KAL *kuršas*).<sup>24</sup> The numerous references to 9 torches cited by Otten in *StBoT*. 15 p. 7 are not in chthonic rituals. Another exception is the festival ritual edited by Otten in *StBoT* 13, in which a long list of deities is divided into 9 groups, each of which receives a sacrifice of an animal.<sup>25</sup> These are the normal gods and goddesses of the Hittite pantheon. The case is similar to that of the two groups of 9 deities occurring in the Akkadian mouth-washing ritual, as mentioned above.

Thus the rationale of the number 9 remains obscure. The 9 years in the myth "Kingship in heaven" may perhaps be connected with the 9 months of gestation, as in the Atrahasis Epic. For the rest, we appear to have a group with special potency probably based merely on the square of 3, as suggested long ago by Kugler. At least the Hittite archives have added a considerable body of evidence for such a notion to that assembled by Roscher.

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2. ASGW XXIV Nr. 1, 82 n. 169.
3. *Siebenzahl und Sabbat bei den Babyloniern und im Alten Testament* (Leipziger Semitische Studien II, 5).

4. *Hilprecht Anniversary Volume* (1909), 303-9; *Sternkunde und Sterndienst in Babel II* (1909-10), 192-7.
- 5A. Ungnad in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* II, 142; E. Weidner in *Archiv für Orientforschung* XV (1945-51), 75.
6. S. Langdon in *Revue d'Assyriologie* 28 (1931), 117; B. Kienast in *Studies in Honour of B. Landsberger* (Assyriological Studies 16, Chicago, 1965), 144.
7. H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion* (Leipzig, 1901), 140, 142.
8. *Actes de la XVII<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Bruxelles, 30 juin-4 juillet 1969*, 145 f.
9. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. J. B. Pritchard (3rd ed., Princeton 1969), 120 ff.
10. *KUB XXXVI* 89 rev. 4-6, 21-22, ed. V. Haas, *Der Kult von Nerik* (Studia Pohl 4, Rome 1970), 150, 152 (cf. 103). The text does not say explicitly that the 9 rivers and seas to which the god has descended are in the Underworld; but if the text is consistent they must certainly be there, since in obv. 12 he has gone down into a pit and in obv. 19-20 he is evoked from the Underworld. However, in *KUB XV* 31 the 9 rivers and the sea do not seem to be in the Underworld (see below).
11. *KUB XXXV* 148 iii 15 (cited by Haas, *Der Kult von Nerik*, 104 n.1), where the copyist, H. Otten, seems to have thought that a reading 12 was possible.
12. *Der Kult von Nerik*, 103-4; *Orientalia* 45 (1976), 199 ff.
13. H. Otten, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 54 (1961), 157.
14. Edited by V. Haas and G. Wilhelm, *Hurritische und luwische Riten aus Kizzuwatna* (Neukirchen, 1974), in particular obv. ii 156 (pp. 155-61).
15. H. Otten, *Hethitische Totenrituale* (Berlin, 1958), 40, 68, 98; also with the addition of the Sun-god of heaven, the grandparents and the "Good Day", pp. 25 and 33.
16. *KUB XXVII* 70 iii 11 (*apud* A. M. Dinçol and M. Darga, *Anatolica* III, 1969-70, 108, 44); *KBo.* XI 10 iii 12, 22 (=72 iii 10).
17. L. Rost in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* I (1953), 371. However, the evidence for this god is hardly sufficient to determine his character.
18. Cf. E. Laroche in *Les syncrétismes dans les religions grecque et romaine* (Colloque de Strasbourg, 1973), 110.
19. Quoted Gurney, *Schweich Lectures 1976*, 29. However, pegs are of course used for many purposes in these rituals (Haas and Wilhelm, *op. cit.* [n. 14] 48 n. 2).
20. This view is based primarily on their frequent connexion with the *wappu* (river bank) and their grouping in lists of divinities with <sup>d</sup>U. GUR; see especially A. Goetze, *The Hittite Ritual of Tunnawi* (New Haven, 1938), 55, and E. Laroche in *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* II (1948), 125. But the *wappu* functions not only as a passage leading to the Underworld, but also as a place of purification; and the god U. GUR is not Nergal, the ruler of the Underworld, as in Akkadian, but either Sulinkatti or another god (Otten, *Zur grammatikalischen und lexikalischen Bestimmung des Luwischen*, 1953, 39-40). That the

MAḪ and Gulses were deities of the house, or of the sacrificer, was already observed by Goetze (op. cit. 56). Otten and Siegelova, in *Archiv für Orientalforschung* XXIII (1970) 32-8, have shown that they were goddesses of individual destiny, presiding at birth, and in mythology creatresses of man.

21. Obv. i. 50-55.
22. This text is edited by Haas and Wilhelm, op. cit. (n. 14), 234 ff.
23. Ibid. 211 ff.
24. E. Sturtevant and G. Bechtel, *A Hittite Chrestomathy* (1935), 112, 3.4 ff.
25. *Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten*, Heft 13 (1971), 29 ff. Cf. n. 20.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

ASGW	<i>Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften.</i>
CTH	<i>E. Laroche, Catalogue des textes hittites.</i> Paris, 1971.
KBo	<i>Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi.</i> Leipzig/Berlin, 1916-.
KUB	<i>Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi,</i> Berlin, 1921-.
STBoT	<i>Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten.</i> Wiesbaden.

## GERMANIC \*luftu-

VITTORE PISANI

THE most common term for 'air' in the Germanic languages is \*luftu- : Goth. *luftus*, Germ. *Luft* f. (but masculine in Upper German), OE *lyft*, OS *luft*, Dutch *luht*.

The etymology of this word is unknown ("Etymologie dunkel" : Kluge-Mitzka, "Et. unbekannt" : Feist) : in Feist's *Etym. Wb. d. got. Sprache*<sup>3</sup> we find, however, a hint at a more precise meaning : «α'η'ρ Luft (eig. "obere Luftschicht" ?)». In this case, the value of *luftus* would be analogous to that of Gk. α'η'ρ which means 'the upper stratus of the atmosphere', as we may infer, above all, from Homer, e.g. *Il.* 14, 288. Now, since α'η'ρ is undoubtedly a formation from α'η'ρω (may be in accordance with α'η'ρ), in opposition to α'η'ρ 'the lower atmosphere' that belongs somehow to α'η'μ or, at least, was understood by the Greeks as pertaining to α'η'μ (from the IE root \*uē- found in Skr. *vā-ta-s*, Lat. *ventus*, etc.), thus I suppose *luftus* to contain the same root appearing in Germ. *Licht*, Goth. *liuhaþ*, etc. and, consequently, going back to an older form \*luk-tu- < \*leuk- (for which see Pokorny, *IEW* p. 687). If so, then, there was in the German—as well as in the Greek—world, a contrast between 'the lower and the upper atmosphere', of which the first one is connected with 'the wind' (α'η'ρ : α'η'μ = Goth. *wind* : *wajan* 'wehen'), while the second was taken as 'the brightness of the light' (α'η'ρ : α'η'ρω = *luftus* : *liuhaþ*).

The reconstructed \*luhtu- is a -tu- abstract with the zero-grade ; such abstracts can be both masculine and feminine : more exactly, the feminine gender appears only in Germanic and Aryan (cfr. Brugmann, *Grundriss* II, 1, p. 440). Moreover, *Luft* is, in German, also masculine, as in Old and Middle High German, and still today we find it so in the Upper German dialects, whereas *die Luft* in Modern literary German has spread from Luther on, who used only the feminine.

From the phonetic point of view, all this presupposes that a pre-Germanic \*kt gave ft besides ht. Now, we find a form with ht in Low German, i.e. *lucht*, already in the Middle Ages ; but here we can suspect

this to be due to the passage *ft > ht*, which took place precisely in Old Saxon and Low and Middle Franconian. It is therefore necessary to think that this passage *ft > ht* is very old, so as to have given rise to a reaction in isolated words, and extended far beyond its original frontiers: for example I have shown elsewhere (*Storia della lingua latina* I, p. 39) that the passage *al > au* before consonants coming from France, established itself in Piedmont and Liguria, and from here spread partially over North and West Tuscany, so that from Lat. *cal(i)dus falsus altus* we find Piedm. *caud faus aut* and so on; in Tuscany (where in Lucca and its surroundings also *caudo fauso auto* are still living) such a phenomenon was rejected by the preserving tendency thanks to which we find also nowadays *caldo falso alto*. But this restoration seized some older *au*-diphthongs too, and, subsequently, *calma* 'sun-heat' (from Gk. *καψμα*) gave rise to *calma* 'good weather', and *sauma* 'pack-saddle' (already in Isidor, *Orig.* XX 16, 5, from Gk. *σαγμα*) appears as *salma* (beside *soma*); and this sporadic passage *au > al* is to be found elsewhere in Northern Italy up to the Adriatic coast (for some instances of which see Rohlfs, *Gramm. stor. della lingua italiana* § 42).

## THE STUDY OF WULFILA'S ALPHABET

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ERNST A. EBBINGHAUS

IT is a curious fact that for over a century and a half the study of Wulfila's alphabet has been limited to only one particular question, viz. the question of its origin. Several generations of scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries have devoted an enormous amount of energy to the solution of that one problem without ever paying attention to any of the numerous other questions which Wulfila's alphabet presents to the palaeographer and to the student of writing.

The earlier students of the Gothic language did not see any great problem in the question of the origin of Wulfila's alphabet. It appeared quite clear to them that Wulfila's letters derived from the Greek alphabet. Quite confidently Lye quoted Leibnitius' somewhat apodictic remark : *Alphabetum Ulphilanum manifeste ex Graeco formatum est.*<sup>1</sup> Had subsequent generations of scholars taken this idea as a hypothesis, investigated it a little closer, and tried to put it on a more scientific basis, had they attempted to discover exactly how the one alphabet could be derived from the other, we should have been spared a not insignificant number of untenable linguistic theories as e.g. the notion of the phonetic double value of the Gothic digraphs *ai* and *au*.

However, in the 19th and the earlier 20th centuries one went to work on quite different assumptions. The idea that Wulfila had derived his alphabet from only one model alphabet was generally given up in favour of what I have called the mixture-theory. It became more or less the *communis opinio* that Wulfila used two or three different alphabetic systems to form his own alphabet: the Greek and Latin alphabets and the *Futhark*, the Germanic runes. Soon one began to differ widely regarding the combination of the model alphabets—Greek and Latin, Greek and runes, Latin and runes, Greek, Latin and runes—and also regarding the share each of the models was supposed to have contributed to Wulfila's system. Only Zacher stayed with the idea of one model alphabet, and in an admirable *tour de force* he attempted to show that Wulfila's alphabet was derived exclusively from the runes.<sup>2</sup>

It might be interesting to investigate some day the question why the mixture-theory has been kept alive for so long a time in ever new

variations. It is after all not the most common phenomenon that a new alphabet is composed of parts of two or three older alphabetic systems. For the early days of Gothic studies the idea of an admixture of the Latin alphabet is understandable. Then Wulfila's alphabet was known only in the so-called Type II, i.e. the script of cod. arg. and cod. Carol. Once the so-called Type I alphabet came to light with the discovery of the Milanese codices the error should have been rectified. However, while the new type of alphabet was recognized as such, the true chronological relation between it and the so-called Type II was not recognized, because one failed to study the difference between the two types in regard to their respective systems of nasal suspension. It is the use of the *n*-suspension alone that proves the so-called Type I to be older than Type II.

Later when the true chronological relation between the two types had become general knowledge the so-called Type II alphabet retained in grammars and handbooks a rather predominant position; it is usually the only form of Wulfila's alphabet of which a picture is given. The so-called Type I ordinarily receives no more than a brief mention, and the question of other types is never even raised.

While the idea of a Latin admixture is, under these circumstances, understandable, if not excusable, I can find no rational explanation for the idea that the runes were also involved in Wulfila's work. But then, while for the student of writing the Germanic runes are no more and no less than an epigraphic script, for many students of Germanic languages they seem to be symbols imbued with peculiar powers which silence reason. One need only read the argument with which Krause tried to force the *o*-rune into Wulfila's alphabet.<sup>3</sup>

What is strangely missing in all these attempts to make the mixture-theory work is a consistent method. The mere assumption that Wulfila used two or three alphabetic systems is an insufficient basis; one must at least prove that Wulfila knew these alphabets. That, however, was never done. Instead one has quoted time and again the famous statement by Auxentius that Wulfila preached in three languages, Greek, Latin, and Gothic, and that he left behind after his death writings in these three languages.<sup>4</sup> That, however, does not mean that Wulfila *read* and *wrote* in these three languages, and I have shown elsewhere that at the time he devised his alphabet Wulfila did not know the Latin alphabet or the *Futhark*.<sup>5</sup> Aside from the failure to establish a solid basis for the mixture-theory by showing at least that Wulfila knew the assumed model alphabets one has also consistently avoided to subject Wulfila's alphabet and his



orthographic system to a rigorous analysis. Such an analysis would have revealed the principles that guided Wulfila in his work, and once these principles were known the idea that he had picked more or less at random individual letters from two or three alphabetic systems could not have survived.

The mixture-theory, however, has survived into our days and even seems to have become something like a *credo*. When in 1950—200 years after Lye—Boüüaert reverted to the idea that Wulfila's alphabet was derived from only one model, viz. the Greek alphabet, he was either ignored or rejected out of hand.<sup>6</sup> Yet even Boüüaert's work was somewhat affected by the mixture-theory inasmuch as he admits an indirect influence of the runes upon Wulfila's alphabet. Certain letters were changed, he thinks, in order to keep them distinct from the runes. The main weakness of Boüüaert's paper lies in the following. First, he relies as everyone before him purely on the comparison of the shapes of the individual letters. Second, he works only with the so-called Type I and Type II alphabets. Third, he does not give an analysis of Wulfila's alphabet as a phonetic system. Thus his work remains somewhat unconvincing though it certainly deserves more attention and Krause's harsh rejection was utterly unjustified.<sup>7</sup>

Some years ago I completed my own study of the question, and in a paper currently in the press I have retraced the steps Wulfila took in devising his alphabet.<sup>8</sup> I have shown there that Wulfila took the twenty-seven letters of the Greek alphabet (including the 'silent' ones) as his model; that he discarded those phonetic values of his model alphabet which he could not use giving new phonetic values to such 'vacated' letters; and that he developed his system of one-letter and two-letter symbols for the vowels out of the possibilities Greek spelling practice of the 4th century offered. Thus the question of the origin of Wulfila's alphabet has finally been answered though the answer is neither surprising nor new: *manifeste ex Graeco formatum est*.

The question of its origin, however, is only one of many equally interesting and equally important questions Wulfila's alphabet has to offer, and it seems to me that after one has spent a century and a half on only one problem the time has come to consider some of the others. Of these many are so obvious that it is puzzling to see that they were never attacked at all. Others emerge only after prolonged and intensive study of the material. In the following I shall try to define some of these problems as I see them. In doing so I shall have to draw in part on

preliminary results of investigations that are still in progress, and in part on material currently in the press.

In the course of my investigation of the Gothic remnants of cod. Vindob 795 I was able to identify a further type of Wulfila's alphabet. Two questions resulted from this. The first of these is a terminological question, the second one is the question of the relationship between this 'new' type of Wulfila's alphabet and the two types traditionally recognized.

Terminological questions can be of considerable importance. In the case of Wulfila's alphabet one has got used to calling the older of the two traditionally recognized types Type I and the younger one Type II. This terminology as I have pointed out long ago can only lead to confusion. If any type of Wulfila's alphabet should be found that is demonstrably older than Type I, if any type were identified that does not directly derive from Type II, if any type could be shown to stand historically between Type I and Type II: what should it be called? Already at their inception the terms were wrong, because it is generally recognized that Type I does not represent Wulfila's own letters, hence at least one older type did exist, and that even if unknown must receive a name; surely one will not try to call it Type\*I? Therefore a terminological reform is urgently needed; the terms Type I and Type II should be given up quickly at a time when the study of Wulfila's alphabet has not yet progressed so far as to make any terminological changes impossible. I propose to use the shape of the *s* as a single criterion to obtain a first rough classification. All forms of Wulfila's alphabet whose *s* has the  $\Sigma$ -shape should be called  $\Sigma$ -type, and all those whose *s* has the form of the Roman uncial should be called S-Type. For further classification, subtypes as it were, other criteria must be found. For the individual execution of types or subtypes the word *hand* should be used as has always been done in the case of the cod. arg.

The second question that resulted from the identification of the 'new' type of alphabet, that of its relation to other types was attacked by M. Wentzler and myself.<sup>9</sup> We were able to show that this type while belonging to the  $\Sigma$ -Type cannot derive from the  $\Sigma$ -Type alphabets known from the Milanese codices, but originated from a cursive  $\Sigma$ -Type alphabet through the process of reshaping the cursive in to a literary or 'book-' hand.

Thus the question of a Wulfilan cursive has become acute. So far we know only one document in which individual characters are written

cursively and that is the Naples deed. That document seems to mix cursive and non-cursive letters but in a somewhat irregular fashion. It might therefore be rash to term its script a semi-cursive without further and closer analysis. It is in this connection that one feels most keenly the loss of the Arezzo deed. Doni's facsimile appears to reveal a script very similar to that of Naples, but the facsimile cannot replace the original, and going through the facsimile letter by letter one is haunted by doubts. A complete assessment of the alphabet of Naples is still a matter of the future. At present I am inclined to believe that indeed Naples presents us with a semi-cursive in its own right, but I am far from certain.

Further work is also needed regarding the Wulfilan cursive. In certain respects the question of the Wulfilan cursive appears to be easier to answer than the question of the true status of the alphabet of Naples and I hope to be able to present my conclusions in the near future. That much, however, I can already say: the Wulfilan cursive was of fundamental importance for the entire development of Wulfila's alphabet.

Aside from these few questions I just mentioned there are, of course, numerous others. Wulfila's alphabet must have had a life span of about 450, perhaps even 500 years. *Sub specie aeternitatis* that is, of course, not much. In the life history of a script, however, 500 years are an enormously long time. One need only think of what happened to the Roman cursive in the various European countries between 700 and 1200. Wulfila's alphabet must be studied historically, and, since it did not live in isolation, it must be studied in conjunction with other alphabets, i.e. the Roman and Greek ones. It must further be studied in conjunction with the movements of the Goths in Europe. We have the two  $\Sigma$ -Type alphabets, that known from the Milanese codices and that which we have tentatively called 'Viennese'; we have further the S-Type. All of them 'book-' hands. Why and where did they originate?

We need most urgently painstaking analyses of the various hands of the palimpsests in Milan and Turin, texts as well as margins. The individual execution of the various alphabets not only poses new questions (which in turn demand answers), but may also help in answering certain questions. I am thinking in particular of the sloping execution of the  $\Sigma$ -Type alphabet in cod. Ambros. Sign. 45 parte superiore. That hand shows a startling affinity to certain executions of the 'sloping' Greek hands of the 5th century.

The study of Wulfila's alphabet is yet in its infancy. I for one should like to see it grow. Admittedly the material with which we have to work is limited, and most of it lies before us in palimpsests which are hard to read. But they are not impossible to read and modern palimpsest photography has been a most helpful invention for the palaeographer. One should be able in the end to present at least an outline of the history of Wulfila's alphabet and a complete analysis of all the types or forms in which it is preserved.

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## CLASS IDIOM IN EARLY INDO-EUROPEAN

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JAAN PUHVEL

THE idiomatic elements of a living language are among its most elusive ingredients, being difficult of access by the ordinary devices of a systematizing grammar.<sup>1</sup> The comparativistic student of a proto-language is especially helpless in the face of idioms, since the latter are by definition one step removed from the level which the linguist can hope to capture in his formulae. Idioms embody the living, vivid, creative component of speech, one that is rarely reflected even by the traditional or written word, let alone reproduced as a reconstruct in the sterile test-tube of a grammarian.

Is there, then, any hope of recapturing some remote Indo-European lexical vividness, the type of semantic translocation that verges on slang or betokens humor? The nature of the earliest documents might seem inimical to such a possibility. Ritualistic or legal language does abound in formulaic lore, as when Vedic *śrad-dhā-* and Latin *crēdō* 'believe' are analyzable into 'place trust' (vel sim.),<sup>2</sup> or Avestan *yaož-dā-* (literally 'apply religious law' vel sim.) corresponds to Latin *iusta facere* 'perform due funeral rites'.<sup>3</sup> I once tried to show that Greek *ékhtiar* 'hatred' and Latin *instar* 'like (ness), accord, harmony' reflect a pair of Indo-European metaphoric antonyms *\*ek-stAr* and *\*en-stAr* semantically similar to German *abstand* and *einstand*.<sup>4</sup> Yet such data show at best that compound terms were capable of figurative meanings, something that would be probable a priori in any language presumed to have been alive.

However, if the formal style of the priestly and legalistic orbit was almost by definition devoid of the humorous, the whimsical, or the grotesque, by contrast the speech of the warrior and the herdsman-husbandman might have been more prone to lexical levity. In this vein Karl Hoffmann<sup>5</sup> has made a significant contribution by distinguishing elements of military slang in the Vedic usages of the verb *snih-*. Indo-European *\*sneygh-* generally has a meaning 'snow' (thus in Greek, Latin, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic, and Slavic), a sense which is not unknown in

Indo-Iranian either (Avestan *snaēžā*-‘to snow,’ Pāli *siṇha*-‘snow’). But the Sanskrit verb *snih*- means ‘stick to, adhere to, be glued to, become attached to,’ and hence ‘love’; at the earlier end of this semantic chain one may discern in the noun *snéha*- (rather than ‘stickiness, attachment’) a less pleasant sense of ‘drool, drivel, slaver,’ not unrelated to *snihān*-‘mucus, phlegm’ or Avestan *snaēžāna*- ‘slavering’ (referring to children, dogs, wolves). The common semantic denomination is ‘stick to,’ but with an already Indo-European nominal side-meaning *\*snigh<sup>m</sup>*- or *\*snoygh<sup>wo</sup>*- ‘sticky stuff’=‘clinging snow,’ from which the verbal formations ‘to snow’ are secondary denominative offshoots describing how the ‘sticky condition’ comes about. In most branches of Indo-European ‘snow’ became the primary sense and the ‘sticky’ verbal meaning disappeared, while in Avestan it coexists with ‘snow’ and in Old Indic the basic verb has retained preeminence. Greek happens to be the only branch which has both suppressed the primary verbal meaning and developed ‘snow’ nouns from both *\*snigh<sup>m</sup>*- (acc. sg. *nipha*) and *\*ghyem*- (*khion*).<sup>6</sup>

Now there are Vedic forms of *snih*-, such as the aorist *asnihad* (*Kāṭhaka Samhitā* 28.4) and the Rig-Vedic causative *snehāyat*, which Hoffmann has plausibly explained as examples of warrior jargon starting from a meaning ‘stick’. The aorist refers to a demonically despatched *dākṣiṇā*, a gift-cow whom the gods repulsed so that *asnihad eṣā* ‘she got stuck,’ i.e. remained glued to the ground incapacitated, unlike her more spunky successors who respectively ‘got up her courage’ for counterattack (*ṛṇmṇam eṣāgāt*) or at least ‘ran away’ (*adrāsīd eṣā*). *RV* 9.97.54 *āsvāpayan nigūtaḥ snehāyac ca* ‘he put the defamers to sleep and made them stick’ is replete with such jargon: *svāpāyati* ‘put to sleep’ can of course be euphemistic for ‘kill’ (like the English equivalent describing canine euthanasia), or it may be poetic (as in the Latin etymon in Silius Italicus 10.152-153 *fundā...soplerat* ‘had laid low with a sling-stone’); but more probably it resembles English boxing slang, particularly in connection with *snehāyat*, thus something full of braggadocio like ‘he knocked them out cold and splattered them across the landscape’.

It is of course possible that Vedic *snih*- reflects a peculiarly Old Indic military idiolect. But there is no reason to think that the semantic proclivities which it manifests were any less typical of other ancient Indo-European groupings. In this context, Vedic *antār dhā*- and Latin *interficiō*<sup>7</sup> offer some significant mutual parallels pointing back jointly to an IE *\*enter dhē*-. The literal meaning of the latter reconstruct is ‘put/do in/

away,' and out of this gloss we can readily construct three English colloquial or slang expressions: 'do in'='kill,' 'do away with'='kill,' and 'put away'='consume, devour'. In Vedic there are both literal meanings (e.g. *RV* 6.44.23 *ayāṁ sārye adadhāj jybīr antāḥ* 'this one put the light in the sun') and the notion of 'do away with,' ironically used of rubbing out death itself (*RV* 10.18.4 *śatām jīvantu śarādaḥ purūcīr antār mṛtyūm dadhatām pārvatena* 'may they live a hundred plentiful autumns, may they do in death with a mountain'); in the *Atharvaveda* (5.28.8) *prātyauhan mṛtyum...adtardādhānā durltāni viśvā* 'they repulsed death, having done away with all ills'; in the *Maṭṭrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* (1.2.1) *antār ārātīr dadhe mahatā pārvatena* 'I have done in the demons with a great mountain'.

The corresponding Latin *interficiō* (standard rendering: 'kill') has a variety of archaic uses: *qui me interfecisti paene vita et lumine* 'you who almost put me out of life and light' (Plautus, *Truculentus* 518)<sup>8</sup> is comparable to the standard legalistic expression for 'banish,' *interdicere alicui aqua et igni* 'forbid one water and fire,' but is on a different stylistic level.<sup>9</sup> Parallel to the Vedic rubbing out by means of a mountain, *ego illam anum interfecero siti fameque atque algu* 'I shall do away with that hag with the help of thirst, hunger, and cold' (Plautus, *Mostellaria* 193).

Another Old Latin author, Lucilius, reflects a different aspect of \**enter dhē-*, that of 'putting away' food: *durum molle voras, fragmenta interficis panis* 'you gobble up hard and soft food, you put away bread-crumbs' (fragment 1175, ed. W. Krenkel [1970]); *piscium magnam atque altilium vim interfecisti* 'you have polished off a big heap of fish and fowl' (fragment 757-8). The meaning 'consume' in a figurative sense has taken off from there, e.g. *interneclonem fore Meleagro ubi torrus esset intersectus flammeus* 'it would be death to Meleagros if the firebrand was consumed' (Accius fragment 451-2, ed. O. Ribbeck).

Perhaps one may glimpse in the various attestations of Latin *interdicō* and *interficiō*, and their Indo-Iranian cognates *antarə mru-* and *antār dhā-*, a trace of Indo-European social class idiom: *interdicere aqua et igni* and *antarə...haxmāng mruyē* imply religious and societal excommunication by verbal means and are thus a prerogative of the priestly class. If that *démarche* does not take care of a menace, the warrior is called on to \**enter dhē-* 'do in' the foe by feats of strength, to the mythical point of heaving mountains. Alternatively, the herder-cultivator, in control of the means of physical sustenance, can \**enter dhē*

'do in' the hostile elements by starving or freezing them, or conversely fortify himself and the rest of society by more conspicuous consumption (literally 'putting away') of the same sources of livelihood. The meanings of \**enter dhē-* thus neatly straddle the second and third estates, even as deities such as Mars, Thraētaona, or Thor overlap the warlike and agricultural functions. Someone like Thor alternately killing giants and gupling down oxen with mead illustrates the two aspects of \**enter dhē-*.

To underline the canonical nature of this tripartition we need but recall Cato's prayer to Mars<sup>10</sup> where three types of onslaughts (diseases, devastations, blights) are to be countered by verbal, warlike, and agricultural procedures respectively (*prohibessis, defendas, averruncesque*), and compare it with the injunction of *Rigvidhāna* 1.2.3: "A kṣatriya shall overcome misfortunes that have befallen him by the strength of his arms, a vaiśya and a śūdra by their wealth, the chief of the twice-born by muttered prayers and burnt-offerings."<sup>11</sup>

Thus the Indo-European priest-judge could \**ked dhē-* 'place trust', \**yews dhē-* 'apply religious law', or \**enter* + say 'remove by spoken word', whereas the warrior and herdsman-husbandman were in semantic charge of \**enter dhē-* in its various colloquial applications. The warrior was a menace: he could do you in, put you to sleep, or make you stick to the sod.

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1. See e.g. Uriel Weinreich, "Problems in the analysis of idioms", in Jaan Puhvel (ed.), *Substance and Structure of Language* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 23-81.
2. Cf. e.g. Emile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (Paris, 1969), 1.171-179.
3. Cf. the *denicales feriae*, rites which purified the survivors of the *nex* of the departed, corresponding to the Avestan decontamination procedures against the demoness of dead matter, Nasu (cognate with Latin *nec*-). The earliest attestation is in the *Leges Regiae*: *homo si fulmine occisus est, ei iusta nulla fieri oportet*. See e.g. Georges Dumézil, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 134 (1948), 95-112.
4. *Glotta* 37 (1958), 288-292.
5. *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 18 (1965), 13-23.
6. Emile Benveniste, "Hiver" et "neige" en indo-européen, *Gedenkschrift Paul Kretschmer* (Wien, 1956), 1.31-39, distinguished Greek *khion* (cf. Sanskrit



*hima-*) as snow-substance from *n(e)iph-* as the atmospheric phenomenon of snowing, and assumed for *\*sneyghw-* a basic meaning 'stick together, coagulate' > 'snow' in a large part of the Indo-European speech area (therein agreeing with Jan Gonda, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 73 [1955], 228-230). The Greek distinction is not historically basic, the proto-sense of *\*gheym-* being 'winter (season), frost', which developed a specific side-meaning 'snow' only in a contiguous dialect area (Greek, Indo-Iranian, Armenian *hlwn* 'snow' besides *jmern* 'winter'). It does not look like Indo-European has perpetuated a primary verb 'to snow', nor, for that matter, a noun with a base-meaning 'snow'.

7. Recently studied by Claude Sandoz in *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris* 71.1 (1976), 207-219.
8. Cf. Gellius 12.7.2 *eadem mulier virum et filium eodem tempore venenis clam datis vita interfecerat* 'the same woman had put out of life her husband and son at the same time by secretly giving them poison'.
9. Cf. Avestan *antarə mru-* in *Yasna* 49.3 *antarə vispāng drəgvatō haxmāng mruyā* 'to all followers of the lie I forbid communion'.
10. *De agri cultura* 141.
11. Translated by Jan Gonda (Utrecht, 1951).

## A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT RECONSTRUCTING INDO-EUROPEAN CULTURE AND RELIGION

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IN recent years, considerable work has been done in the field of Indo-European culture and religion. This activity is mainly due to three new approaches to old problems :

- (a) in the field of archaeology, extensive excavations in Russia and the Balkans has led to a better understanding of the prehistoric cultures and population movements of the 5th to the 3rd millenium B. C. ;
- (b) in the field of lexical and semantic analysis, the traditional compilation of lengthy lists of correspondences has been supplemented by studies in depth of the diachronic development of the specific connotations of technical terms to discover their original functional meaning ;
- (c) in the field of comparative mythology, a search for the basic organization of the pantheon has led to the recognition of the correlation between social structure and internal hierarchization of the world of the gods.

These new trends can best be illustrated by the works of Marija Gimbutas, Emile Benveniste and Georges Dumézil.

In a number of studies since 1956, Marija Gimbutas has connected the Proto-Indo-Europeans with the Kurgan people, infiltrating Europe and the Near East from the Dnieper-Volga steppe.<sup>1</sup> The only major change in her views was a revised dating of the process, presented at the Indo-European conference in Philadelphia in 1966. Briefly, the Kurgan culture starts in the 5th millenium B.C., beginning its move to central Europe via the Danube in the 4th millenium B.C. In the second half of that millenium, a new culture appears in the northern part of the Balkans, east-central Europe, central Europe, and Trans-Caucasia, marked by complex changes due to 'kurganization': the horse and vehicle are evidenced ; in the eastern Balkan hills, strategic positions are converted to strongholds. But the tribal groups dominated by Kurgan elements really prevail in the 3rd millenium B.C. : this, for Marija Gimbutas, is

the time when most of Europe gets 'kurganized.' The groups have increased their mobility, and their expansion lays the foundation for the IE-speaking peoples of the Bronze and Iron Age: the Germanic tribes deriving from the Corded Ware/Battle-Axe complex in the northwest, the Baltic tribes from the East Baltic-Central Russian Battle-Axe complex; the Slavic tribes from the north Carpathian Corded Ware/Battle-Axe complex; the Celtic-Italic-Illyrian-Phrygian tribes to the Central European Corded Ware/Battle Axe complex; etc.

For Marija Gimbutas, this *Kurgan* culture was not limited to the common feature of the *barrow*, important as it may have been. She also listed such features as: a patriarchal society, a class-system, the existence of small tribal units ruled by powerful chieftains, a predominantly pastoral economy including horse-breeding and plant cultivation, small subterranean or above-ground rectangular huts of timber uprights, small villages and massive hill-forts, crude unpainted pottery decorated with impressions or stabbing, religious elements indicating a sky/sun god and thunder god, horse sacrifices and fire cults.

Benveniste's searching probes into the vocabulary of Indo-European institutions<sup>2</sup> appear to confirm these views: he depicts a society with closely knit kinship links, reinforced by cross-cousin marriage; the individual is involved in a complex network of allegiances, based on mutual trust, support and confidence in the concentric system of the community: (nuclear family→) expanded family→clan→tribe→people, as well as in the social hierarchy which put the ruling caste of priest-magician-lawmaker on top and the majority of the cattle-raisers/horse-breeders/producers at the bottom, with the warrior-caste, the defenders of the group, in the middle. This society is essentially ethnocentric and xenophobic: it is very hospitable to insiders, but excludes aliens; within the group, services are rendered as pure favors, without expecting anything in return, beside the normal cycle of exchange, where something is offered to obtain something else by way of reciprocation. In the Indo-European society described by Benveniste, the 'king's basic function is to set the rules, to determine what is 'right,' which accounts for his functions being more religious than political. As the I.E. tribes move on the war-path, the need grows for a more dynamic leadership: the people in arms march under the direction of powerful chiefs.

Benveniste does not examine the Indo-European pantheon: his concern about religion remains restricted to the examination of a few basic concepts, e.g., the 'sacred' whose dual aspect: (a) filled with

divine power ; (b) forbidden to human contact, is described strictly on the basis of internal evidence (by studying the connotations of the relevant terms in the IE languages, without recourse to the concepts of *mana* and *tabu* like Wagenvoort or Gonda,<sup>3</sup> but, unfortunately, without discussions of the views of Baetke<sup>4</sup> on Germanic, based on Otto's dichotomy of the 'sacred').

Geroges Dumézil has relentlessly labored since the thirties in a sustained and continued series of efforts to reconstruct the Indo-European functional system of divine powers and some of the great myths in which they are involved.<sup>5</sup> This basic postulate which he derives from Dürkheim and Meillet, is that the IE gods are essentially features of the social system : having recognized, with Benveniste,<sup>6</sup> that a number of early IE societies show a hierarchized tripartite social organization, he uses this as the framework underlying the pantheon of the IE peoples. Each level has its specific concerns, namely :

- (a) the first function (the *priestly* stratum)—the maintenance of magico-religious and juridical sovereignty and order ;
- (b) the second function (the *warrior* stratum)—physical prowess ;
- (c) the third function (the *herder-cultivator* stratum)—the provision of sustenance, the maintenance of physical well-being, plant and animal fertility, and related activities.

It is Dumézil's assumption that this tripartite 'ideology', reflecting three fundamental components of human social behavior and their correlated supernatural counterparts, existed as such in the Proto-Indo-European homeland, that the tradition was carried with them by the migrating groups all over the vast expanse of the territory later dominated by Indo-Europeans, and that elements of it can still be identified in their myths and epics, from the *Veda* and *Mahābhārata* in India, and from the *Edda* to the *Heimskringla* in the Germanic North.

The identification of archeological data with linguistic data is always a rather risky enterprise, and the recent fate of 'Illyrian' which, in the late thirties, was considered as one of the major components of the IE world should give us pause. Indeed, after some of the most prominent European archeologists linked the Lusatian civilization and the spread of the urnfields with the migrations of the alleged Proto-Illyrians,<sup>7</sup> these became the agents of the early Indoeuropeanization of large territories in Europe and even in the Middle East, since Krahe identified them with some of the 'people of the sea' mentioned in Egyptian documents and with the Philistines.<sup>8</sup> Nowadays, the term

'Illyrian' has been reduced to size and applies strictly speaking only to a small territory in the south-eastern part of Dalmatia.<sup>9</sup> The problem has recently led Rüdiger Schmitt<sup>10</sup> to question Marija Gimbutas' Kurgan hypothesis; his main argument is against her assumption that the Proto-Indo-European culture is the only candidate to fit the Kurgan material. Rüdiger Schmitt claims that whatever we assume for Indo-European, e.g., inferring social structure from habitation patterns and burial rites, may have existed in other language (and ethnic) groups. The presence of roots like *\*wēgh-* 'drive' or terms for the vehicle, its wheels, its axle, nave, pole, yoke, etc., is not compelling evidence either, since we can reconstruct Proto-Semitic roots for 'drive', 'yoke', and the like. Vehicles were known to the Proto-Finno-Ugrians as well. Along this line of argument, he concludes, with Kronasser (in a 1961 position paper)<sup>11</sup> that linguistic paleontology should remain an autonomous method: only when a particular cultural group has been proven to be IE, i.e. when the linguistic data are sufficiently specific should coordination with archaeological finds or other extralinguistic data be attempted.

The critique of Rüdiger Schmitt in the case of Marija Gimbutas is, however, in many respects rather unfair, since a large number of her assumptions are based on well-established, carefully researched Indo-European data. If we examine the domestication of animals, it is undoubtedly obvious from the lexicon with terms for 'kine', 'bull', 'steer' and related activities ('milking') that cattle raising was the major economic activity of the Indo-Europeans. As Benveniste<sup>12</sup> has demonstrated the possession of livestock was the symbol of wealth and status, as in the cow-keeping kingdoms of the African Great Lakes region. If one looks at the relative chronology of animal husbandry in prehistoric Europe, the introduction of cattle-breeding antedates the penetration of the Kurgan culture in a rather striking way:<sup>13</sup> the early European agriculturists of the Neolithic who established themselves in Greece before 5000 B. C. and reached the Low Countries before 4000 B. C. mainly reared sheep and goats, although they had some cattle, pigs and dogs. The Linear Pottery culture, responsible for the transmission of Agriculture across Europe from Hungary to Holland between 4500 and 3700 B. C., consisted essentially of cattle breeders, who castrated a large portion of their animals, and the cultures that developed later in France, Britain, Scandinavia, as well as in central Europe continued to practice cattle-breeding (beside wheat cultivation) as the basis of their subsistence economy until the end of the Neolithic period. With the Copper Age,

two main animal breeding traditions appear in Europe: one centered on cattle rearing in the early copper mining cultures deriving their ore from the Carpathians; the other based on the breeding of *goats* and *sheep* spreading over Europe from 3900 to 2000 from Greece to France, with its point of origin somewhere in the Near East in the 5th millennium. This second group appears in east-central Europe ca. 3000 B.C. at the time when the Carpathian copper centre is declining and when the copper starts being imported from the South, especially from Anatolia and the Near East. It is also at this stage that the horse, in the form of the tarpan, appears to have been first domesticated. The earliest evidence comes from the Tripolye culture in southern Russia, and its spread over the rest of Europe is linked with the increase in sheep farming and the mounting trade in copper from the south. Important for the problem of the Indo-Europeans is the fact that the penetration of the horse in northern Europe may be connected with the Single Grave Complex. It should also be noted that cattle prevail over goats, sheep, pigs only in the Bronze age in European settlements as bone-counts in archeological sites have shown. Recent work on the history of domestic animals<sup>14</sup> tends, accordingly, to weaken arguments based on the cattle economy to identify certain prehistoric cultures as Indo-European,<sup>15</sup> but the connection with the horse is particularly significant. The horse has, indeed, acquired a privileged position among the IE domestic animals: it had not only the indispensable auxiliary of the warrior, whether it pulled the chariot or he rode it, but it had also become closely associated with him in life and death: his horse's neighing and whinnying would tell the warrior what fate had in store for him—the Greek heroes of Homer believed in the oracular powers of their horses, and so did the Persians according to Herodotus and the Germanic 'nobility' according to Tacitus, and medieval chronicles tell us about the 'clues' the Slavs were getting from their horses;<sup>16</sup> the typical sacrifice of the warrior caste, performed by the highest among them—the victorious king [*rājan-*] is the *aśvamedha* in India, and parallel horse sacrifices are to be found in Ireland at the coronation of the kings of Ulster, in ancient Gaul, in Thracia and especially in Rome, where the *Equus October* is offered to Mars according to a ritual that shows some similarity with the Indian;<sup>17</sup>—and when the warrior dies, the symbiosis of man and horse is illustrated by the cremation of the animal on his funeral pyre. Theriomorphic gods appear as horses, e.g., the Celtic goddess Epona, but most characteristic is the equine nature of the *divine twins* and *Dioscures*, the sons of the Sky-God who appear as 'owners of horses' (*Aśvinau*) in the Veda, having 'white

horses' in the Greek tradition, bearing equine names in the Germanic euhemeristic tale of *Hengist* and *Horsa* about the Saxon conquest of Britain.<sup>18</sup>

In view of the importance of the horse, it is rather significant that Hittite which has the first complete treatise on horse-training ever written—the Kikkuli text dating back to the 14th c. B.C.—does not show the word for 'horse': throughout the text it is represented by the Sumerian ANŠE.KUR.RA, which means literally 'donkey of the foreign country' (occasionally, Accadian *SISU* 'horse' is also used). However, there is a hieroglyphic Hittite *ašua*- 'horse,' which could reflect IE *\*ek'wos*, without having to be borrowed from the Mitanni-Aryan *\*aśva*- 'horse' (=Skt. *aśva*-). Directly derived from this source, however, is the title by which Kikkuli designates himself: Hittite <sup>LU</sup> *aššuššanni*- 'master of the stables.'<sup>19</sup> In this case, the ending *-ni* indicates Hurrian suffixation, so that the term must have reached Hittite via Hurrian.<sup>20</sup> The Mitanni-Aryans lived, indeed, in close contact with the Hurrians, and from the middle of the 15th c. B.C. on the whole Near-Eastern culture seems to have been influenced by new Mitanni-Hurrian techniques of hunting and fighting from a chariot, as these motives appear in the art of Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia at that time. The innovators are obviously the Mitanni-Aryans, who must have become known as the best horse-trainers in the Middle-East. If, however, the chariot is an innovation introduced by them, the only common IE heritage is the heavy four-wheeled cart;<sup>21</sup> the terminology is old with terms for 'wheel' like Latin *rota* OHG *rat* (secundarily, Skt. *ratha* 'chariot,' or Gk. *kuklos*, Skt. *cakra*- (secundarily, 'cart' in Tocharian A *kukāl*, B *kokale*); the words for 'axle' and 'hub' are originally names of parts of the body ('shoulder' [G. *Achsel*] and 'navel'); 'shaft' and 'harness' provide good Old Indic: Hittite parallels, namely *iṣā*=*hissa*- and *dhur*=*turiḡa*-; etc.

All of this tends to show that a time perspective must be carefully preserved in the discussion of the cultural material. When we are examining Indo-European society, we have to keep in mind that, like any other human community, it is *not static*. In spite of all the impressive material assembled by Georges Dumézil, and the enlightening solution his approach has brought to some problems, his tripartition of Indo-European society postulates an early specialization of a military caste, which may more tend to reflect the situation of an expanding society conquering new territories or threatened in its homeland. The case of the Germanic peoples may illustrate this state of things: their unsophis-

ticated techniques necessitated the yearly rotation of the fields, and in some areas, the reallocation of arable land was done on the basis of individual needs by the representatives of the community. This 'agrarian communism' is, however, only on record for the regions close to the Roman border,<sup>22</sup> where a substantial part of the male population had to be more or less permanently mobilized, whereas the less apt to fight and the women carried the burden of providing for the needs of the community. This accounts for the situation described by Tacitus in his *Germania*: chieftains would gather a retinue of young warriors who would be 'their pride in time of peace, their support on the battlefield,' and the *comitatus*, as it was called, developed a code of honor in keeping with the ethics of a warrior caste.<sup>23</sup> But there is no evidence that the same system prevailed elsewhere in 'free Germany': there, people owned their land and house, and were free to sow wheat, rye, oats barley in their fields and to rear horses, kine, pigs, sheep, goats and poultry as they wanted. With the movements of population that prevailed after the 3rd century A.D., the military element became undoubtedly a major group in the social complex, and a leader chosen from among them presided over the destiny of the people. Actually, the original IE pastoralist may very well have been both a producer and a warrior: in peace-time, his energies are focused on his animal husbandry, also partly on hunting, but if his group is threatened or goes on the move, his function becomes essentially military—though he may return home to his cattle and fowl like Cincinnatus when the battle is done. The fact that gods like Mars have agrarian connotations can be better understood in this context;<sup>24</sup> similarly, the connection of Thor with the peasants may reflect more than his role as atmospheric god on account of his hammer Mjølner, the thunderbolt. But Mars has also another function: he is the god associated with the old Italic practice of the *uer sacrum*, which was a religious decision to 'swarm,' i.e. to send the young generation away to find a new habitat. Mars would then appear to them in animal shape and lead them to their new site, and they would be henceforth named after this animal, e.g., the *Picentes*, after the woodpecker (*picus*) which show them the way.<sup>25</sup> This practice of gradual occupation of the soil must have been inherited from IE, and may be the motivation of their migration, far away, presumably in small groups of young warriors with a chieftain, submitting or expelling the former occupant of the area they conquered. This is the way the earlier Hittites present themselves: their invasion of Anatolia is not a massive migration, but rather a slow infiltration, a progressive build-up.<sup>26</sup> The Indo-European penetration



had started already in the 3rd millenium B.C., with the arrival of the Luwians ;<sup>27</sup> by and by they unified the country, but their institutions still reveal in the oldest documents the survival of an assembly of the Hittite nobility—the *pankuš*—which not only advised the king, but also exercised some important juridical prerogatives<sup>28</sup>—just as the Germanic *þing*. This is in keeping with the growing complexity in social organization and the stages of social evolution, with the staggered appearance of definite institutions.<sup>29</sup> In the comparative scheme emerging from a world-wide study of cultures both contemporary and archeologically investigated in the Old and New World, at the tribal stage *unranked* descent groups, pan-tribal associations—‘fraternal orders’ of all those of the same descent—prevail, but as the community grows and diversifies, the extended family ‘swarms’ for economic reasons : moving to establish new settlements leads to profound social changes : *ranked* descent groups, *full-time craft specialization*, and even the central accumulation and redistributive economy evidenced by the Germanic ‘agrarian communism’ or by the ‘feudalism’ developed by the Hittites.<sup>30</sup> A further important change was produced by the shift from a rural to an urban habitat : when the Achaean warriors made the *πολις* the centre of their social, political, and economic activity, the old social ranking based on descent groups was progressively replaced by the groupings defined by their common habitat<sup>31</sup>—true law and social stratification were now established. By the time the Vedic Indians entered the subcontinent the tripartite division *may* have been further elaborated, since the hymn to the Aśvins in the 8th Book of the Rigveda (35 : 16-18) explicitly mentions the priestly order, the nobility and the commoners as the social levels worthy of their blessings. The later Puruṣa hymn (RV X, 90 : 11), however, already mentions the four classes resulting from the *partial* integration of the conquered people in the Aryan society : in the cosmogonic myth, the primeval ‘man’s’ mouth becomes the *bhramans*, his arms (symbols of strength) the *rājanyas* (‘ruling nobility’), his thighs (supports of the body) the *vaiśyas* (the ‘producers’), and his feet, the *śudras* (the original ‘outsiders’). Though only the three upper classes are allowed to participate in the cultural and ritual activities of the Aryans, and the *śudras* were considered as ‘unclean,’ the three other classes showed a lot of flexibility : there was no restriction on intermarriage ; the class membership was not hereditary ; the warriors, in particular, were drawn from the Aryan community at large. Interesting in this context is also a hymn to Indra in the older part of the Rigveda (III.43), where the poet asks the god to make him a ‘herder of men’—like the Homeric ποιμην

λαων—and gives his choices in the following order: 'make me king'—and if not, 'make me a priest'—if not, 'give me unperishable riches.'

It is important to keep these facts in mind when evaluating Dumézil's sociological interpretation of the pantheon. Another point is the impact of the dynamic character of Indo-European society on the same pantheon: to be sure, the Indo-Europeans had a god of the bright luminous sky. His name *\*dyeus* is connected with the Latin word for 'day' (*diēs*) as well as 'god' (*deus*—adjectival *divus* 'divine'), which survives ON *tívar* gods', OPruss. *deiwas* 'god', etc. As a god *Dyaus* had receded to the background by the time the Vedic hymns were composed, though references to his former role in the hierogamy with Mother Earth—in the compound *Dyāvapṛthivī*, his omniscience and his creativity—as Father Sky—*Dyaus pitā* parallel to *Jupiter*, still occur in the text. The changeover made *Varuṇa*—together with *Mitra*—the 'powerful and sublime master of the sky'—he 'separated the two worlds', he established order in the universe, he became the universal sovereign, *sahasrākṣa*—'with a thousand eyes'—informed of everything, wielding an ominous magical power—the *maya*—<sup>32</sup> which makes him fit in Dumézil's classification as the Vedic embodiment of magic sovereignty at the first function level. But his position as ruling god is threatened, and the Rigveda gives evidence of the conflict between *Varuṇa*-centered religion and *Indra*-centered religion.<sup>33</sup> The result of the alteration of the original sky-god can be very complex, and when Dumézil reclassifies *Tyr*, the Germanic descendant of *\*dyeus*, as the representative of the *Mitra*-aspect of sovereignty, i.e. the judicial component of the first function (Odin being the Germanic 'magic sovereign') one cannot escape the impression that this focuses only on one aspect of his functional role, namely his breaking a solemn promise and sacrificing his arm to insure the safety of his kin in a heroic gesture paralleling that of Mucius Scaevola in Ancient Rome.<sup>34</sup> Actually, the Germanic god *\*Tiwaz* (>ON *Tyr*) has been associated in the *interpretatio romana* with *Mars* as appears from the translation *Tuesday* for *dies Martis*, but on account of the votive inscription to *Mars Thincsus* by Roman auxiliary troops from the Germanic Low Countries found along Hadrian's Wall in Great Britain, and of the German and Dutch words for *Tuesday*: *Dienstag/dinsdag*, both containing the genitive of the old designation of Germanic tribal assembly of free men, the *þing*, this has been seen as a confirmation of the juridicial functions of *\*Tiwaz*.<sup>35</sup> There may however be another way to approach the problem: there seems to be some evidence that *\*Tiwaz* was venerated as tribal god by the Suebians along the

Roman *limes*; on the other hand, the Saxon chronicle of Widukind mentions that they celebrated their victory over the Thuringians by erecting huge columns to Mars whom they called (*H*)*irmin*—a term which reappears in *Irmisul*, the idol Charlemagne is supposed to have destroyed after his victory over the Saxons in 772, and which is described as a cosmic pillar—by Rudolf of Fulda—*universalis columna quasi sustinens omnia*.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, in the abjuration formula the vanquished Saxons had to swear upon conversion to Christianity, the main gods mentioned were Donar, Wodan and their tribal god *Saxnôte*. The question, then, rises: if \**Tiwaz* is identified with Mars, if the Saxons venerate a cosmic god under the name of (*H*)*irmin* and the symbol of a cosmic pillar and identify him with Mars, if the major god of the Saxons, beside Donar and Wodan, is their tribal god *Saxnôte*, is it not plausible that (*H*)*irmin* and *Saxnôte* are merely two names of the old sky-god \**Tiwaz* under his specific functions of *cosmic sovereign* and *protector of the tribe*.<sup>37</sup> His close association with the tribal assembly—the *þing*—would obviously follow from the second aspect of his personality...

But perhaps the most troubling problem about Dumézil's sociological approach is what it leaves out; to limit ourselves to a few issues: (a) what is the position of the sun-worship in his system? To be sure, the sun-deity, *Sūrya*, occupied a secondary position in the R̥gveda, and the sun-cult was not important in ancient Rome and Greece, but in northern Europe, its rich symbolism appears on the rock-drawings and the sun-chariot of Trundholm attests to the importance of the cult.<sup>38</sup> There are also myths about the sun's chariot and its horses closely associated with the divine twins. It is therefore the more puzzling that the validity of Caesar's statement about the Germanic people, that the sun, the fire, and the moon—*Sol*, *Vulcanus*, *Luna*—are their main deities, can not be properly established, but then also *Agni*, the Vedic fire-god, does not fit in Dumézil's system,<sup>39</sup> whereas the antiquity of two Indo-European terms for 'fire', one 'profane'—Hittite *paḥḥur*, Gk. *πῦρ*, G. *Feuer*, E. *fire*—the other 'sacred'—Skt. *agnih*, Lat. *ignis*—also a god name in the Hittite nomenclature *Agniš*.

(b) Why does the system not work for Greece? Palmer has tried to establish some traces of the tripartite division in the repartition of the land in the Mycenaean world,<sup>40</sup> but apart from a few samples like the judgement of Paris or the social organization of Plato's Republic, Dumézil and his disciples have not been able to come up with much that fits their pattern in the Greek mythological world.<sup>41</sup>

(c) Why is the Anatolian world completely left out, except for the Mitanni documents? To be sure, like most of the Near Eastern people at that time, the Indo-European invaders of Anatolia have taken over most of the Sumero-Babylonian mythological tradition and reinterpreted it to suit their own specific needs, and the surprising appearance in the treatises of the 14th century B.C. of the Vedic god names *Mitra*, *Varuṇa*, *Indra* and *Nāsatyā* as the deities of the Mitānni-Hurrian princes in Upper Mesopotamia contrasts with the apparent total loss of Indo-European religious traditions by the earlier Anatolian immigrants. Should one assume that the Anatolians have 'lost' the Indo-European social structure in their new homeland to take over the Oriental type of divine kingship? That is definitely not true until the middle of the 2nd millenium B.C., in the period of the 'Old Kingdom.' Actually, the Indo-Europeans that came into the Middle East in the 3rd millenium B.C. may have represented a less elaborated stage in their societal development so that what appears as a 'loss' is actually an archaic feature. What is suggested here is similar to what is slowly being recognized in the linguistic field: up to quite recently, Hittite was considered as a strongly adulterated type of Indo-European—a kind of creolized Indo-European developed in the Middle Eastern territories conquered by the Hittites under the influence of the submitted and surrounding Semitic and other non-Indo-European populations. Upon closer examination, one fails to recognize such a *re patterning* of Hittite on the basis of the languages with which it has come into contact: the Hittite system has not become closer to the Semitic or the Hurrian or any other non-Indo-European Anatolian linguistic pattern.<sup>42</sup> Whatever can be recognized as strictly Indo-European in Hittite appears to be more archaic, though losses are possible as well, e.g., the *dual* which has totally disappeared, whereas it should have been preserved under Semitic influence. If we look at the verb system, we find a model consisting of:

- (1) an indicative and an imperative, but only the *indicative* has a paradigmatic structure, contrasting *present* and *non-present*; *active* and *medio-passive*; *active* ( 'inflectum' ) and *perfectum*;
- (2) paradigmatic endings characterizing the 'active' versus the *perfectum* and appended vocalic suffixes marking the *present* versus the *non-present* as well as the medio-passive.

This system, as Meid has shown,<sup>43</sup> can form the basis from which the later IE system evidenced by Sanskrit and the classical languages has developed (see table):

Thus, on the linguistic level as well as on the social and religious level, a difference in time perspective would account for the *Sonderstellung*, for the alleged particular position of Anatolian: it would merely reflect an earlier stage of the Indo-European complex—and maybe in the light of all this we should give Sturtevant's Indo-Hittite hypothesis a new look!

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in sizable farming communities and the patriarchal pastoral—more mobile, dynamic and expansionistic Kurgan civilization.

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21. Cf. Kammenhuber, *Hippologia Hethitica* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1961), 24-25 (with fn. 101); R. A. Crossland, 'Immigrants from the North' (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, Part 2, 3rd edition, Chapter XXVII [Cambridge University Press, 1971]), 844, 873-874. The four-wheeled cart was introduced in Europe by the Kurgan culture as early as 3000 B. C. A clay model dating back to 2000 B. C. was found at Bűdakalász, north of Budapest.
22. Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* VI, 22 (cf. G. Dumézil, *Mitra-Varuna* [Paris: Gallimard, 1948; 2nd edition], 154-159; *Les dieux souverains des Indo-Européens* [Paris: Gallimard, 1977], 202).
23. Tacitus, *Germania*, chapters 13-15 (cf. R. Much, *Die Germania des Tacitus erläutert*, 3rd edition by W. Lange and H. Jankuhn [Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1967], 221-244). On the significance of the institution in the Germanic world, cf. especially D. H. Green, *The Carolingian Lord* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965). On its Indo-European context, see E. Benveniste, 1969: 103-121; 1973: 84-100.
24. As K. Latte (*Römische Religionsgeschichte* [Munich: C. B. Beck, 1960], 114) points out, he is functionally connected with the 'hostile, unfamiliar outside



- world' (cf. Benveniste, 1969 : 314 ; 1973 : 256-257), but G. Dumézil (*Archaic Roman Religion* [Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1970], 213-240) is definitely right in rejecting the view that he was essentially an 'agrarian' god (cf. also Latte's argument [114-121] on the 'military' [kriegerisch] character of the ritual activities connected with Mars).
25. Latte, 1960 : 124 ; Dumézil, 1970 : 208.
  26. Kurt Bittel, *Grundzüge der Vor-und Frühgeschichte Kleinasiens* (Tübingen : F. Wasmuth, 1950, 2nd edition), 52.
  27. Bittel, 1950 : 54-55 ; R. A. Crossland, 'Immigrants from the North' (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, Part 2, 3rd edition, Chapter XXVII [Cambridge : University Press, 1971], 842. Friedrich Cornelius, *Geschichte der Hethiter* (Darmstadt : Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 43-45, 292-293.
  28. Cf. Albrecht Götze, *Kleinasten* (Munich : C. H. Beck, 1957), 86-88. On the IE context of the Hittite *pankuš*, cf. F. Cornelius, 1976 : 54-56 (based on his *Geistesgeschichte der Frühzeit II* : 2 [Leyden : E. J. Brill, 1967], 13-16, 241-242).
  29. John E. Pfeiffer, *The Emergence of Society* (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1977), 103.
  30. Bittel, 1956 : 43 ; Götze, 1957 : 102-107 ; Cornelius, 1976 : 68-70.
  31. Benveniste, 1969 : 309-310 ; 1973 : 252-253.
  32. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York : Meridian Books, 1963), 66-72.
  33. Edgar Polomé, 'Approaches to the Study of Vedic Religion.' In Paul Hopper (ed.), *Studies in Descriptive and Historical Linguistics. Festschrift for Winfred P. Lehmann* (Amsterdam : J. Benjamins, 1977), 405-415.
  34. Cf., e.g., *Mitra-Varuna* (Paris : Gallimard, 1948 ; 2nd edition), 165-169, 174-177 ; *Mythe et épopée I* (Paris : Gallimard, 1968), 424-428 ; III (Paris : Gallimard, 1973), 268-274.
  35. Cf., e.g., G. Dumézil, *Gods of the Ancient Northmen* (translation edited by E. Haugen, Berkeley-Los Angeles : University of California, 1973), 42-48. On *Tuesday* as translation of *dies Martis*, cf. especially Udo Strutynski, 'Germanic Divinities in Weekday Names.' *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 3 (1975), 363-384.
  36. See, in particular, Jan de Vries, 'La valeur religieuse du mot germanique *irmin*.' *Cahiers du Sud* 1952 : 18-27.
  37. Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte II* (Berlin : W. de Gruyter, 1957, 2nd edition), 16, 18.
  38. Cf., e.g., Peter Gjelling and Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Chariot of the Sun* (London : J. M. Dent, 1969), 9-26, 136-137, 140-145, 180-183. See further J. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte I* (Berlin : W. de Gruyter, 1956 ; 2nd edition), 110-115, 355-358.
  39. He is described as a kind of marginal god on account of his appearance at the beginning or/and the end of the list of the Vedic divinities to whom

- sacrifices are offered (cf. G. Dumézil, *Ancient Roman Religion* [Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1970], 322-323; see also C. Scott-Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology* [Berkeley-Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1973 ; 2nd edition], 15-16, 106.
40. L. R. Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans* (London : Faber & Faber, 1961), 93-99.
  41. Cf. G. Dumézil, 'Les trois fonctions dans quelques traditions grecques,' (*Hommage à Lucien Febvre*, vol. 2 [Paris : Armand Colin, 1953], 25-32 ; C. Scott-Littleton, 'Some Possible Indo-European Themes in the "Iliad". (*Myth and Law among the Indo-Europeans*, edited by Jaan Puhvel [Berkeley-Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1970], 229-246.
  42. See, e.g., Annalies Kammenhuber, *Hethitisch, Palaisch, Luwisch und Hieroglyphenluwisch* (*Handbuch der Orientalistik* I. 2.1-2. *Altkeleinasische Sprachen* [Leiden : E. J. Brill, 1969, 119-357], 266-269.
  43. Wolfgang Meid, 'Probleme der räumlichen und zeitlichen Gliederung des Indogermanischen' (in Helmut Rix [ed.], *Flexion und Wortbildung. Akten der V. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft* [Wiesbaden : L. Reichert, 1975], 204-219). The model presented here is taken from Erich Neu, 'Zur Rekonstruktion des indogermanischen Verbal-systems' (*Studies in Greek, Italic and Indo-European Linguistics Offered to Leonard R. Palmer*, edited by A. Morpurgo Davies and W. Meid [Innsbruck, 1976], 239-254), 252. Basic arguments for this analysis of Indo-European verbal morphology are to be found in J. Kurylowicz, *The Inflectional Categories of Indo-European* (Heidelberg : Carl Winter : 1964), 56-147, and C. Watkins *Geschichte der indogermanischen Verbal-flexion* (= *Indogermanische Grammatik. III. Formenlehre*. Vol. 1 ; Heidelberg : Carl Winter : 1969.

## THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID

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KAJAL SENGUPTA

FRAMED between Chaucer and Shakespeare Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* has suffered by comparison, and even while acclaiming the beauty of the poem, critics damn it with their faint praise. "The *Testament* forms a not unworthy pendant to Chaucer's poem" is the best that H. S. Bennet<sup>1</sup> can say and Patrick Cruttwell<sup>2</sup> comments "In subtlety of characterization Henryson does not try, or need, to rival Chaucer; his heroine is 'given' him by his forerunner and he does not try to change her." Henryson's poem, however, can be shown to be not only equal to, but in many ways greater than, Chaucer's or Shakespeare's rendering of the story.

Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* has the complex pattern of a modern psychological novel—the plot develops out of the action and interaction of three or four characters upon each other. The background of the Trojan War has been practically eliminated and our attention is held entirely by the words, deeds and thoughts of Troilus, Criseyde and Pandarus, with Deiphoebus, Diomed and Hector appearing briefly backstage. Architecturally, the poem is a complete and complex structure, but it has not been built on palatial proportions; it has, rather, a Gothic intricacy of detail and every inch of space has been carved over with patterns, traceries and designs.

Shakespeare's play has epic dimensions—it is not at all the love story of Troilus and Cressida though their names supply the title of the play. We get a panoramic view of the Trojans and the Greeks ranged on either side and the mighty issues at stake in the long drawn out wars. When recalling scenes from the play, one thinks first of the great war-councils and of Ulysses' speech on order. Troilus, the lover, is only one aspect of Troilus, the man, and when Troilus argues with Hector it is the warrior-statesman who speaks, not the lover.

In Henryson the first thing that strikes us is the almost naked simplicity of the tale. Gone is Chaucer's complexity, gone Shakespeare's epic dimensions. Against the 8239 lines of Chaucer's poem and the 3364

lines of Shakespeare's five acts, the story is narrated here in a bare 616 lines. But

In small proportions we just beauties see  
And in short measures life may perfect be.

Henryson's story is no longer the story of Troilus and Criseyde, it is the *Testament of Cresseid*. Cresseid alone is his subject-matter and the title itself is sufficient indication that the poet has shifted his ground and that he is concerned, not with an age, not with society, not even with human relationships, but with the drama of one single individual—the drama of Cresseid's journey to God.

In Chaucer, Criseyde's character reveals a highly complex psychological analysis of different states of minds, but it is a kind of static rather than growing psychology. At particular moments the searchlight of Chaucer's perception explores every nook and cranny, every little crevice and ramification of Criseyde's mind so that the whole is laid bare, and we marvel at Chaucer's ability to explore the multitudinous thoughts of the human mind. But though Criseyde is thus analysed, she herself does not really change. The Criseyde of the end is no different from the Criseyde of the beginning, "tendre-herted, slydyng of corage" (V 825), dependent and weak. That the character is conceived of in this manner is, in fact, consistent with the philosophical framework of *Troilus and Criseyde*, for man is revealed as essentially a passive creature, subject to the vagaries of Fate, Destiny and Fortune. Right through the poem we are made to feel a deep sense of overruling Destiny; again and again Fortune steps in and changes the lives of the human beings despite their deliberate avowals to the contrary. Troilus stands in the temple mocking all lovers, but

O blynde world, O blynde entencioun !

... ..

For may no man fordon the lawe of kynde (I. 211, 238).

Criseyde prepares to go home from Pandarus' supper

But O Fortune, executrice of wyrdes,

O influences of thise hevenes hye !

Soth is, that under God ye ben oure hierdes,

Though to us bestes ben the causes wrie. (III. 617-620)

and Troilus, when he hears that Criseyde must go back to the Greek camp, reaches the sad conclusion

For al that comth, comth by necessitee :

Thus to ben lorn, it is my destinee (IV 958-9).

Appropriately, in this setting, Chaucer's treatment of Criseyde is the study of human *reactions* rather than the study of mental growth.

In Shakespeare we find a more dynamic kind of analysis but the process analysed here is not limited to the inner mental change of one or two individuals. A whole age, an entire system of values is in the melting pot and out of the shifting patterns, new modes of life, new systems of thought are seen to emerge. It is the birth of the Renaissance that Shakespeare describes and he becomes the psychologist, not of a man, but of an age. How the emergent Renaissance values affect individuals inevitably forms part of Shakespeare's study and this is seen particularly in the presentation of Troilus' character. The new value of Honour, the desire to eternalise the temporal, the consequent frustration—

This is the monstrosity in love, lady, that the will is infinite and the execution confin'd (III ii 77-79) [contrast Browning's romantic idealism in

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp  
Or what's a heaven for]<sup>4</sup>

and the final shock of disillusionment—

This she? No; this is Diomed's Cressida (V ii 135)

—all show the new philosopher at grips with and trying to come to terms with life.<sup>5</sup>

But our concern is with Cressida. What attention has Shakespeare paid to her? She is there as the object of Troilus' love, but is she really an important character in the play? Helen seems to be of greater significance because it is she who sparks off the mighty arguments at the camp. Helen and Cressida in actual fact play parallel roles for they both serve merely as the points on which the wheels of action have to rest before they can be set in motion.

This being her role in the play, Cressida inevitably slips into secondary significance and is not treated by Shakespeare with very great psychological depth. Cressida is the typical shallow-minded coquette—too superficial to be regarded seriously. Ulysses sums her up rightly

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay, her foot speaks, her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motive of her body.  
.....Set them down

For sluttish spoils of opportunity  
And daughters of the game. (IV. V 55-63)

There is not much depth in her and there is not much depth in Shakespeare's treatment of her.

In a sense, therefore, both Chaucer and Shakespeare, though for different reasons, present us with a woman in whom there is no mental or psychological growth. It is here that Henryson differs from them and, in a way, scores over them both. Sandwiched as he is between the two mighty giants of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, small as his poem is in comparison to theirs, humble as his own aim is—merely to

report the lamentatioun  
And wofull end of this lustie Cresseid (ll.68-69),

his poem nevertheless acquires a significant stature and bears the stamp of genius. For he gives us something that neither Chaucer nor Shakespeare did—a Cresseid that grows, changes, matures in the course of a mere eighty-six stanzas. Her first speech—petulant, irresponsible, rebellious—and her last—humble, self-critical, full of remorse—show the great change that has taken place in her, and at the end of the poem she becomes a sadder but definitely a much wiser woman.

## II

Henryson's poem is remembered by most readers because of two incidents that occur in it—a) Cresseid is stricken with leprosy (ll.334-343) and b) towards the end of the poem an encounter takes place between Troilus and Cresseid in which neither recognises the other and Troilus, unaware of the ironic implications of his act, gives alms to the disfigured leper woman in front of him. Everything else in the poem is usually forgotten and too many critics have found it convenient to disregard the real significance of these incidents and to put their own interpretation on them. This interpretation, arising out of their predetermined conclusion that Henryson's poem is but an extension of Chaucer's is, generally, that Cresseid is punished because she was faithless to Troilus. The last encounter, they conclude, reveals Henryson's skilful use of pathos.

Nothing could be further from the truth. If we carefully analyse the sequence of events in the poem it becomes patently clear—as I intend to show—that the curse of leprosy has nothing whatever to do with her

*falsing* of Troilus. The disease affects her long after she has left Troilus. Henryson does not specifically mention how much time has elapsed, but Cresseid's gradual transformation from the lover of Troilus to first, the mistress of Diomed, then a common prostitute in the Greek camp, then an abandoned woman rejected by all men, then one fleeing from the camp to find refuge in her father's house—this transformation did not take place in a day. In all this time nothing happens to destroy her beauty or rack her body with disease. Even at this stage Henryson could have shown the leprosy to be a direct consequence of the life she had led, because this affliction, according to medieval medical theory, was often contracted by syphilitic infection.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps this association lay at the back of Henryson's mind and, certainly, our awareness of it adds a touch of grim physical realism to the story. But Henryson deliberately elides over this possible explanation. He most clearly tells us that the terrible curse of leprosy falls on her much later because of something else, something that she says and does *after* she has taken asylum in her father's house, something that is far more serious than the mere sin of *Lechery*.

In the inner recesses of her father's house, in the 'secreit orature' of Venus and Cupid, Cresseid angrily calls out on her Gods :

Allace that ever I maid you sacrifice :  
 .. .... O fals Cupide, is nane to wyte bot thow  
 And thy mother, of lufe the blind goddes ! (11.126-135)

This blasphemous speech, Henryson tells us, shakes the very foundations of the universe. The fixed framework of the heavens moves as Cupid rings his silver bell, and in an extraordinary and magnificent pageant of the skies the seven planets descend from their spheres and arrange themselves with stern disapproval in front of Criseyde. The pageant continues and develops into one of the most fantastic trial scenes in literature, with Cupid as the public prosecutor, Mercury 'the foirspeikar in the parliament' Saturn and Cynthia as joint judges and the other planets as a silent jury sanctioning the verdict and pronouncing the ultimate punishment of leprosy.

What was Henryson's purpose in giving us this extraordinary episode ? There is no doubt that structurally this is the central and most significant point of the story, the climax of the whole drama. It is with this episode that the doom of leprosy has been linked up. The punishment, therefore, has nothing whatever to do with Cresseid's earlier actions—it is a direct consequence of the fact that Cresseid shook her

first at Venus and Cupid, defied her gods and put all moral responsibilities on them.

Though Henryson had modestly started by saying that he would merely give the concluding chapter to Chaucer's story, *The Testament of Cresseide* is no mere epilogue to *Troilus and Criseyde*. It is a complete and self-sustained drama for both the Crime and the Punishment are contained within its pages. The story ends with her death, but death itself becomes transmuted into something ennobling for, before she dies, Cresseid has endured the Hell of her punishment, passed through the Purgatory of her sufferings and has entered the Paradise of true wisdom and understanding. If Troilus' soul in Chaucer's poem

blisfully is went

Up to the holughnesse of the eighthe spere (*T&C*. V 1808-9)

Cresseid's spirit, redeemed and purified, will walk with Diana

'In waist woddis and wellis' (*T of C*. 1.588)

But that, to quote Dostoyevsky, is "the beginning of a new story the, story of the gradual rebirth of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his gradual passing from one world to another, of his acquaintance with a new and hitherto unknown reality."<sup>1</sup>

### III

Henryson begins the poem with himself but the prologue is so woven into the main texture of the story that we cannot think of it as a prologue at all. It is a cold evening in April with showers of hail descending from the north. Venus is rising in the East and as he looks out of the window he wishes to pay her reverence even as he has done in the past. But like Gower in *Confessio Amantis* he is too old to be her servant. With wry humour he therefore decides that instead of the heat of passion he will warm himself by the fire in his chamber. We have a cosy picture of a middle-aged Henryson settling down comfortably in front of the hearth with a drink in his hand, while the Arctic blasts rage outside. To make the evening complete he picks up something to read and, with Venus so recently in his thoughts, he appropriately takes out Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.

The skilful movement of this dramatic introduction not only leads us directly to the heart of the story, it establishes a homely, realistic



framework against which Cresseid's fate will be presented. It overleaps the distances of time and space and the Greek woman enters most naturally into the immediacy of our world. The setting is significant also as an ominous forewarning of what is going to happen. It is not 'the joly tyme of May' when 'the floures gynne for to sprynge' (*Legend of Good Women* II. 36-38) but 'ane doolie sessoun', bitter and cold, a time for doleful thoughts for 'ane cairfull dyte'. Significantly, this is the moment that Venus rises, shedding her beams far and wide. This unusual association of Venus presiding over a cold and winter evening prepares us for a story of sorrow and suffering in which Venus will continue to remain in the ascendent.

With Chaucer's book in front of him, Henryson muses over the story contained within its pages and observes that if anyone wishes to know more about Troilus, let him read Chaucer. Henryson thus re-iterates an obvious point that Chaucer had made at the beginning of his poem, that he will tell 'the double sorwe of Troilus'. The opening stanzas of *Troilus and Criseyde* concern themselves entirely with Troilus and in 11.54-5 Chaucer repeats

ye may the double sorwes here  
Of Troilus in lovyng of Criseyde.

Criseyde comes into the story so that the story of Troilus' sorrow can be told. Admittedly, Chaucer's absorption in her complex psychology brings her to the foreground of the tale but again, towards the end Chaucer draws a veil gently over her fate

But al shall passe ; and thus I take my leave. (V 1085)

The poem concludes with an account of Troilus dying on the battlefield and ultimately being led by Mercury to

the pleyn felcete  
That is in hevene above. (V 1818-9)

Henryson draws our attention to this ending (11.43-60) and tells us that his concern is not with Troilus but with Cresseid. Henryson's story proper begins from line 71. This is the beginning of Cresseid's drama and it is no more a continuation of Chaucer's poem than is the *Aeneid* a continuation of the *Illad*. Chaucer merely provides the take-off point, for every story must begin at a specific moment within a sequence of events. The consequences of her desertion of Troilus form the *first act* of this particular drama.

These consequences are described with great pathos in the five stanzas (11.71-105) that follow. In moving words Henryson tells us that

she is now reaping the bitter fruits of her earlier act of betrayal. Diomed, having satisfied his lust, has no further use for her and casts her out of his home. The humiliation and degradation of this experience is powerfully conveyed by a single phrase

Quhen Diomeid had all his appetyte  
And mair (italics mine)

With two words Henryson conjures up before our eyes the ugly ending to the affair—Cresseid continues to offer her body to Diomed and he continues to gratify his physical urges on her, even though this no longer gives him any pleasure. Eventually the now mechanical act becomes so repulsive that he summarily gets rid of her.

Thus abandoned, she has no joy left in life and she becomes a common prostitute, not because she wants to, but because no other course is left open to her.

Than desolait scho walkit up and down.  
And sum men sayis into the court commoun (11.76-77)

Eventually even the soldiers begin to look down upon her. Spurned and despised by all, she finds she has no place left in society and, disguising herself, she secretly goes to her father's house.

The setting has been set and the action of Henryson's drama will now begin. But first it is important to analyse the significance of the condition in which Cresseid now finds herself. This brief survey makes it clear that Cresseid is now enduring the world's censure and this is retribution enough for one who had been 'the flour and *A per se*/of Troy and Greece' (11.78-79). This is her punishment for her betrayal of Troilus and the judgement that we dread upon this bank and shoal of time *has* come full circle on her.

Henryson however, refuses to condemn and excusing Cresseid's 'womanheid', her 'wisdom and fairness' he blames Fortune alone for what has happened—'and nothing throw the gilt of the' (11.90-91). Henryson's remark, deliberately made at this point, determines the reader's own attitude, since it is through his eyes that we are looking at Cresseid. Later, when Saturn passes judgement he further exclaims

O cruel Saturne, fraward and angrie,  
Hard is thy dome and to malitious (11.323-24)

Yet as the story progresses Cresseid (and inevitably, through her, the reader) grows in understanding and before she dies she blames none but

herself. Cresseid at the end is therefore much wiser than the reader himself was at the beginning of the story. This deliberate manipulation of the reader's own moral sense indicates the sophisticated mastery of Henryson's art. We are not—he seems to tell us—omniscient judges over Cresseid's destiny. We are as fallible in our judgement as she is, and as we come to realise this, a great bond of sympathy is established between the heroine and ourselves. Henryson's comment thus becomes the choric comment of imperfect mankind.

The meeting between Cresseid and her father is most moving in its tenderness. He asks no questions, casts no blame on her, and without hesitation opens his door to his daughter. Calchas too, like Henryson, like us, has not the heart to find fault. Cresseid at this stage is still Chaucer's Criseyde and Henryson extends to her—through his own comments and through her father's welcome—the pity that reigns in gentle hearts, the pity that Chaucer gave her.

She is still, to all appearances, the same gentle lady whom we had learnt to love, and understand so well in Chaucer and whom Chaucer could not condemn :

She so sory was for hire untrouthe

Iwis I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe. (*T&C.V* 1098-9)

But in the secret oratory of her father's house this passive gentle creature who was 'so slydyng of corage' suddenly revolts against her fate and angrily accuses the Gods (II.126-140). This burst of violent anger takes us by surprise because it is the last thing we expected from the woman we had known. Chaucer's static character thus springs to life and Henryson's drama begins.

This is the first of four speeches that Henryson gives her. She is petulant, angry and full of self-pity and in the presence of such action the detached compassion of Chaucer disappears and is replaced on our part by amazement, excitement and direct involvement in the dramatic metamorphosis of character. In her speech she accuses Venus and Cupid of treachery and betrayal and has the temerity to abjure her faith. —'Allace that ever I maid you sacrifice' (II.126). We have moved out of Chaucer's medieval world of Fate and Destiny into a more dynamic state of things. Fortune's wheel had loomed large in *Troilus and Criseyde* and the medieval attitude of acceptance was always present in the essential passivity of the characters. In this first speech Henryson's Cresseid also holds the Gods responsible but the old submission has gone. Philosophically, however, her position is untenable for she is, contradic-

torily, both resigned and rebellious. She is resigned in the sense that she still believes that the Gods control human life but she lacks the Boethian acceptance, the faith that Fate's decree is part of a compassionate God's beneficent scheme of things '.....it is by goodness that He rules all things, since He rules them by Himself and we have agreed that He is the good. It is this which is the helm and rudder....., by which the fabric of the universe is kept constant and unimpaired.' (*De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Bk III Ch.12). Again, 'whether the work of Fate is done with the help of divine spirits of Providence, or whether the chain of Fate is woven by the soul of the universe.....one thing is certainly clear : the simple and unchanging plan of events is Providence, and Fate is the ever-changing web, the disposition in and through time of all the events which God has planned in his simplicity.' (Ibid. IV Ch.6) We see in Cresseid a medieval mind rebelling against the medieval order without fully realising the implications of this rebellion, that there can be no freedom without responsibility. When ultimately this realisation comes she is also able to return with humility to the gods of faith.

Immediately after this heretical speech she falls into a swoon and the grand spectacle of the Heavenly court-room begins. The seven planets—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Phoebus, Venus, Mercury and Cynthia—take their places, Cupid calls the court to order and the arraignment of Cresseid begins. Cupid's speech clearly indicates where Cresseid has sinned ; it is necessary to quote it in full :

'Lo ! quod Cupide, 'quha will blaspheme the name  
Of his awin god, outhir in word (or) deid,  
To all goddis he dois baith lak and schame,  
And suld have bitter panis to his meid.  
I say this by yone wretchit Cresseid,  
The quhilk throw me was sum tyme flour of lufe,  
Me and my mother starklie can reprufe,  
Saying of hir greit infelicitie  
I was the caus and my mother Venus,  
Ane blind goddes hir cald that nicht not se,  
With sclander and defame injurious :  
Thus hir leving unclene and lecherous  
Scho wald returne on me and my mother  
To quhome I schewe my grace above all uthir.  
And sen ye ar all sevin deificait,  
Participant of devyne sapience,

This greit (injure) done to our hie estait  
 Me think with pane we suld mak recompence,  
 Was never to goddes done sic violence.  
 As weill for yow as for myself I say ;  
 Thairfoir ga help to revenge I yow pray.'

Not once does Cupid refer to the act of wrong-doing Cresseid had done to Troilus. That is outside the terms of reference of this court of enquiry. It is not on the moral but on the religious level that the entire accusation is levelled, for Cupid is not concerned with her relation to other humans, his sole concern is her attitude to God. Henryson's intention is clear. Like the unknown dramatist who wrote *Everyman*, he is presenting a story in which the solitary protagonist is Man in relation to God, and human relationships are relevant only in so far as they throw light on this central drama.

Cupid's speech indicates also his attitude to human action—

'Hir leving unclene and lecherous  
 Scho wald returne on me and my mother.'

If Cresseid's blasphemous words had taken us by surprise, Cupid's reaction is also unexpected, for he makes it clear that man is responsible for his own action and he should not attempt to pass the burden on to God. This is indeed cutting across the medieval theological dispute on Fate and Free-Will. Lady Philosophy had taken infinite pains to explain to Boethius how God's fore-knowledge can co-exist with man's Free Will : 'God sees those future events which happen of free will as present events ; so that these things when considered with God's sight of them do happen necessarily as a result of the condition of divine knowledge ; but when considered in themselves they do not lose the absolute freedom of their nature' (V ch. 6). Cupid does not show any such concern. In Henryson's world therefore it is not Cresseid alone who is changing, the Gods also seem different. Cupid's words may appear vindictive but in fact that is not so. It is not Divinity taking revenge to protect his own ego, it is Divinity insisting that man must take upon himself the burden of his own life. The birth of individualism in man, after all, requires a readjustment in the concept of God.

And so, Cresseid's purgatorial suffering begins. When she awakens from her swoon and sees the loathsome reflection of her leprous face on her mirror her limited intelligence immediately puts a wrong interpretation on the action of the Gods. This is her second speech (11.351-357) and though it is only seven lines it is significant because it shows that she

has understood nothing of what has happened. She transfers the motivations of her own weak ego to Cupid and declares that her only offence is that she has upset the vanity of the 'craibit goddis.' Self-pity blinds her so that she can understand neither herself nor the gods.

Later, when her father comes to her, she puts the blame on fate—'Sic is my wickit weird' (1.385)—and realising that she cannot stay there, goes out by a private gate to a village half-a-mile away, to a leper asylum. At the beginning of the story she had been cast out from the camp, now she is cast out from all normal human relationships. Twice rejected by society, she enters the world of outcasts, but mentally and emotionally she refuses to identify herself with them. She does not eat, she does not drink, and remains in a dark corner of the house alone, while significantly, night falls outside and black clouds overwhelm the sky.

In this condition, she makes her third speech—*The Complaint of Cresseld*. This is the longest of her speeches—11.407-469. There is an elegiac sadness in the lines as she bids goodbye for ever to all the happy things of life she has known in the rich and splendid world of courtly love. Never again will the Garden of Love bid her welcome, never again will the Month of May return, the season when, according to Chaucer, lovers do the 'observaunces that longeth onto love and to nature' (*L.G.W.* 1.151). She advises all the fair ladies of Troy and Greece to take her story as an example and warning that nothing lasts in life. It is the old *carpe diem* theme—'Nocht is your fairness but ane faiding flour' (*Testament of Cressid* l. 461). Cresseid's mood indicates, in a way, a regression to the old Chaucerian attitude of passivity and resignation for she still refuses to take the responsibility for her actions. But there is a new note in the Complaint. Something *has* been learnt, for anger has been curbed and though she is still preoccupied with Self, her wilful ego is being broken down. Gone is the querulous petulance, the personal vendetta with the gods. She realises that she cannot fight them and though even now full of self-pity, she no longer regards her fate as the vindictive act of the Gods, and sublimating her own tragedy, as it were, identifies it with the fate of all mankind.

True self-knowledge however, has not yet come and so her sojourn in Purgatory continues. More humiliation lies ahead. She cannot even allow herself the luxury of grief. She must learn to lead the leper's life, learn to clap her clapper to and fro, and pressed by cold and hunger and the body's needs, she has to force herself to go out and beg. From this point begins the regeneration of Cresseid. As she learns to accept her

fate and painfully struggles to identify herself with the leper community, she returns slowly to the world of human relationships and rediscovers sympathy and understanding in her fellow-beings. The gentle affection of the leper-lady who goes to help her in her sorrow is a touching re-affirmation of life and love—the more movingly so because it occurs among those who have been cast out from the world of life and love.

But the worst is yet to be. Like Job, she must suffer to a degree beyond which there can be no greater suffering and her humiliation reaches the ultimate point of endurance when, some days later, Troilus passes by. Troilus does not recognise the disfigured leper standing in front of him, begging for alms, but some faint chord of memory is struck and his thoughts turn to the woman he had loved; thus moved 'for knichtlie pietie' and for 'memoriall of fair Cresseid' he gives money and jewels to her. Cresseid too, with her leprosy-affected eyesight fails to perceive in this knight her one-time lover, and when the Trojan troops move away, she asks the others, 'Who is this generous lord?' The reply comes 'Schir Troylus it is, gentill and fre' (1.536) and she falls to the ground in a swoon.

When she recovers, she is a transformed creature and the lament that follows—the fourth speech of Cresseid—is spoken, in sorrow yes, but also in wisdom, in humility, in acceptance. Now at last, as she utters the refrain :

O fals Cresseid, and trew knight Troilus

the veil drops from her eyes. As in her earlier Complaint, she admonishes all lovers but it is a different advice that she now gives. Where formerly she had warned them not to trust fickle Fortune, now she warns them to beware of fickle women like herself. She admits with deep humility that all are not like her, even if their number is not many, and ends the lament with :

Nane but myself as now I will accuse. (1.574)

After this, she takes a piece of paper and writes her will—The Testament of Cresseid—leaving all her jewels and wealth to the leper folk and requesting that Troilus be informed of her death. Finally she commends her soul to Diana and thus she dies.

From the moment that Cresseid had begun to lead the leper's life, the change in her character was indicated. The sympathy that the leper woman had extended to her had not been given in vain for Cresseid had not spurned it and through acceptance she herself had learnt to approach her fellow-beings with sympathy and understanding. When Troilus

departed, even before she was aware of his identity, she had most naturally associated herself with the outcast community by assuming that what he had given was for them all. It was not a private gift to her but he 'has done to *us* so greit humanity' (italics mine). Now in her last will and testament her humility and her humanity are most clearly evident. She does not despise the lepers but identifying herself with them wholly, leaves all her gold and ornaments to them. Her other elements she gives to baser life—

I beteiche my crops and carioun

With wormis and with taidis to be rent. (ll. 577-8)

She is now 'all fire and air,' like Cleopatra she has 'immortal longings' in her. Thus purified, chaste, inviolate, she commends her soul to the Goddess of Chastity and we know that Heaven will take the prodigal child back in its fold with tenderness and love.

An alternative title to the poem may well be *The Return of Cresseid* for the story is of one who had been cast out by man and cast out by God and who, in the end, returns to Man and is received back by God. It has been a painful and arduous journey, for Cresseid has traversed long distances from blind self-pity to wise self-knowledge, from selfish pride to humility, from blasphemy to ultimate re-union with God. Her story is the story of sin, suffering and redemption; she is tragic in a way that Chaucer's Criseyde was not and Shakespeare's Cressida was not to be.

#### IV

Seen in this light, Henryson's poem, so far from being a sequel to *Troilus and Criseyde* is not a love-story at all. It tells how Cresseid sins against God, how God punishes her, how through penance, suffering and contrition, she overcomes her sin of Pride and her sin of Ire and how eventually she returns to God. The thematic epicentre of the poem is Religion, not Love. The obvious parallel with Chaucer's great love-poem has made critics short-sighted and they have not thought it necessary to look beyond to any other of Chaucer's works. *Troilus and Criseyde* no doubt provides the groundwork on which the plot of Henryson's poem has been constructed but so far as the theme and Henryson's own aim are concerned, the real inspiration of *The Testament of Cresseid* is to be sought in the concluding section of *The Canterbury Tales*. Henryson's poem is, in fact, an *exemplum* on the Parson's sermon :

'For which seith Seint John Crisostum : 'Penitence  
destreyneth a man to accepte benygne every peyne that



hym is enjoyned with contricioun of herte, and shrift  
of mouth, with satisfaccioun ; and in werkynge of alle  
manere humylitee' (The Parson's Tale l.108).

After his introductory remarks on Contrition and Penitence, the Parson goes on to discuss 'whiche been the seven deedly synnes, that is to seyn, chieftaynes of synnes.' He begins with *Superbia* (Pride) and enumerates its various branches. At least seven of these may be attributed to Cresseid—*Arrogance*, *Impudence*, *Contumacie*, *Insolence*, *Presumpcioun*, *Irreverence* and *Pertinacie*. In the *Remedium contra peccatum Superbie* he tells us how this sin may be overcome 'the remedie...is humylitee or mekeness . . The humilitee in herte is in foure maneres. That oon is whan a man holdeth hymself as noght worth biforn God of hevene. Another is whan he ne despiseth noon oother man. The thridde is whan he rekketh nat, though men holde hymn noght worth. The ferth is whan he nys nat sory of his humiliacioun' (11.475-478).

Equally applicable to Cresseid is his description of Anger 'Yet comen ther of Ire manye mo synnes, as wel in word as in thought and in dede ; as he that arreteth upon God, or blameth God of thyng of which he is hymself guilty, or despiseth God and alle his halwes...Whan a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte thanne wole he be angry.. and defenden or excusen hys synne by unstedfastness of his flessch...or elles it is his destinee.' (11.579-584).

Here, in effect, then we have the story of Cresseid. The deeply moving religious tone of the poem is Henryson's own original contribution to the legend. His *Morall Fabillis* also with their *moralitas* endings show the strongly moral bent of Henryson's mind. Though the tales are delightful in themselves the animated narration is always overshadowed by the serious conclusions and the immediate earthiness of the story placed against a background of heaven and hell. In this he differs from Chaucer. Chaucer is also concerned with ethics but his morality is more social than religious. This is evident in *The Canterbury Tales*. The conventional *Parson's Tale* apart, the *General Prologue* and the *Tales* primarily deal with man's relationship with his fellow-beings and, for Chaucer, more heinous than the Seven Deadly Sins is the sin of Hypocrisy.

The contrast is evident in the way the two poets treat the Chanticleer fable. Chaucer enlarges the canvas of his animal story to include the whole of mankind going as far back as Adam and Eve

Wommanes conseil broghte us first to wo  
And made Adam fro Paradys to go (N.P.T.11.3257-58)

But apart from the one mock-epic simile that describes the confusion on the farm—'They yolliden as feendes doon in helle' (l. 3389) the scene remains firmly fixed on earth, and pride and flattery are abrogated for their this-worldly consequences. Chaucer introduces, it is true, an elaborate discussion on God's foreknowledge and man's free will but having done so, he deliberately retreats, declaring 'But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren, (1.3240). On the other hand Henryson at the end of *The Taill of Schir Chantecler and the Foxe* refers to 'flatterie and vaneglore' as 'twa sinnis' (1.612) and dwells on Satan's pride and everlasting punishment :

Fy, puft-up pryde ! Thow is full poysonabill !  
Quha favoris the on force man haif ane fall ;

... ..

Tak witnes of the feyndis infernall,  
Quhilk houndit doun wes fra that hevinlie hall  
To hellis hole, and to that hiddeous hous,  
Because in pryde thay wer presumptuous. (11.513-599)

The direct concern with things temporal shows Chaucer to be in advance of his age, but his religion, as distinct from his morality, tends to be more conventionally medieval. He sharply criticises the degeneration of the clergy but he never actually questions the authority of the Church. He is a contemporary of Wycliff (1320-1384) but he nowhere says, with Wycliff, that the relationship of man to God is direct and requires no intermediary. His dependence on Church and priest is evident, by implication, in his writings and this explains why, when he does bring the *anagogical* level of existence into the picture as in *Troilus and Criseyde* he presents man as a passive creature rather than directly determining his own destiny,

The Lollard movement was suppressed by the end of the fourteenth century but it did not die. In 1407 an English Wycliffite named John Reseby had taken refuge in Scotland and he was not the only fugitive to escape thus. These Scottish Lollards secretly read the writings of Wycliff and nurtured the movement during the early years of the fifteenth century. Their influence was obviously not insignificant for in 1425 they attracted the attention of the Scottish Parliament which directed the Bishops to suppress them.<sup>8</sup>

How far Henryson was aware of this movement and how far he was influenced by it, we can only guess. Very little is known of Henryson's life. In an introductory note to the Latin version of Henryson's *Testament* (in a manuscript begun in 1639) Sir Francis Kinaston refers to 'one Mr.

Robert Henderson sometimes cheife schoole master in Dumfermling'. It is not improbable that he imbibed something of the Wyclifian spirit and so, in a sense, anticipated the Reformation. From his treatment of Cresseid's story it is clear that he regards man's relationship with God as direct and personal. Everyman of the Morality play had to be led to Confession and receive the last sacraments from the priest—in fact go through the entire *Via media* of the Church—before he was able to enter Heaven. The play, in effect, inculcates the sacramental teaching of the Catholic faith and glorifies priesthood; for Cresseid the journey to God is quite a different one.

One thing, however, Henryson's poem has in common with *Everyman*. In the morality play the whole of man's life has been reduced to one single dramatic moment, the most significant moment of all, the moment when man faces death and has to make his last reckoning on earth. Henryson's choice of title for his poem indicates that he also is focussing our entire attention on Cresseid's last act before her soul leaves her body. The will that Cresseid writes occupies only fifteen lines in the poem (11.577-591) and immediately after, almost in the very act of writing, she dies. One can think of so many alternative titles that Henryson might have given to the poem but, ignoring all the other events in the story, he has singled out these fifteen lines as the most momentous by giving to his poem the title *The Testament of Cresseid*. This fact alone is an indication of the religious tone of the poem; not only does the Testament throw her whole life into perspective, it is in and through this last farewell to earthly existence that Cresseid shows that she is now ready to enter the Life Everlasting.

Thomas à Kempis lived from 1380 to 1471. Although we know so little of Henryson's life, in all probability he lived towards the end of the fifteenth century and died *circa* 1505. Who knows if he had read *The Imitation of Christ* and if the words of à Kempis were in his mind as he brought the poem to a close: 'Always keep in mind your last end and how you will stand before the last Judge from whom nothing is hid... Therefore, live rightly now, and grieve for your sins, that in the Day of Judgement you may stand secure in the company of the Blessed' (Bk I ch. 24). Again, 'stand in awe of God's judgement and fear the anger of the Almighty God. Do not presume to investigate the ways of the Most High, but rather examine yourself, see how greatly you have sinned.' (Bk III ch. 4).<sup>9</sup> We do not know whether Henryson had access to *The Imitation of Christ* but can we doubt that certain words from *Ecclesiastes* echoed in his mind as he made Cresseid write her last Will and Testament: 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it' (12: 9)?

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THE "FAUTLEST FREKE" : CONCEPT  
OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN SIR GAWAIN AND  
THE GREEN KNIGHT.

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JHARNA SANYAL

I

A SUDDEN explosion of sound and colour fills the whole world of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and the narration which began with a broad sweep, with reference to 'Troye' and Rome, abruptly closes down on a select court multitude in the midst of their feast and gaiety.

Nowel nayted onewe, neuened ful ofte ;  
And syþen riche forth, runnen to reche hondeselle,  
gezged zeres-ziftes on hiz, zelde hem bi hond,  
Debated busyly aboute po giftes ;

(I. 65-68)

The merriment being over, the feast follows :

Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme ;  
When þay had waschen worþyly þay wenten to sete,  
þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed. (I. 71-73)

The narrator has introduced a closed community which is the aristocratic coterie that sums up the quintessence of contemporary culture. The story may have been gleaned from the ancient lore telling of the 'turbulent times of King Arthur,' of which the poet professes to have heard, but the distance in time and space creates no barrier to developing that degree of involvement with the subject-matter which is necessary for its re-creation in literature. The poet reduces the distance to an advantageous minimum by contemporizing the situation with cognizable details of mediaeval armour, dress, jewel, food hunting, architecture and such others, which give the story a typical mediaeval make-up.<sup>1</sup>

The world of the Romances is too confined for the folk who thronged the field described by Langland. His is the world of reality seen in concrete terms and weighed in the critical balance of practical moral judgement. The Romance-writers enliven the world of imagination in

contemporary terms and their task ends in the transliteration, in achieving the ancient world in terms of reality, in pictures of the then world. In both, the work of literature is one step further from life, either way. In Langland, it is from life to the criticism of life; in the Romance-poets, it is from the imaginative veracity to its realisation in terms of actuality, from shadow to substance. The Romances are the vintage tales of adventure and wonder hauled up with contemporary accessories and peopled with knights and ladies introduced with contemporary credentials in an unmistakably mediaeval society.

When at the feast the participants take their seats at the table, it is with 'þe best burne ay abof,' i.e. 'in authorized order, the high ranking first';<sup>2</sup> and the king is accompanied by "mony liflych lorde, ledez of the best/Rekenly of þe round table alle þo rich breþer" (I. 38-39). But here too, as has been pointed out, is an anachronism, for "in this description the company do not sit at the Round Table, but as in a hall of the author's own time;"<sup>3</sup> the Round Table was devised to avoid this kind of hierarohical order at the table. The knights, the chief adorners of Arthur's Round Table, represented all that was held best in mediaeval culture erected on the absolutes of universal ethical norm, reinforced by the doctrines of orthodox Christian morality, which formed the bedrock of life for all ages. They were segregated from the masses by being "conventionally thought to uphold all good order and virtue aganist the disorder threatening from outside"<sup>4</sup> and thereby necessarily opposed to the "chrulishness and all its vices" that "threaten from outside" to destroy the stability of society. Functionally, then they were the preservers of society with the king as their head, and it is in this capacity that they held a definite and therefore a static position in society as members of a class. The virtue of one knight was more or less identical with that of the other, and Chaucer's Knight had little difference from his compeers. Thus the individuality of the knight is not to be sought in his eccentricities or idiosyncrasies (which, if he had any, the poet thinks unnecessary to mention), but in the identification of the self with the group or the class of which he was an inseparable part. In mediaeval etymology, 'individual' would mean strongly enough, 'inseparable.' This connotation of the term was determined and characteristically so, by the theological argument trying to explain the nature of the Holy Trinity. "The effort," according to Raymond Williams, "was to explain how a being could be thought of as existing in his own nature yet existing by this nature as part of an indivisible whole."<sup>5</sup> By an extension of the concept in the social context it meant the "inseparable" part of the society. In the mediaeval scheme

a peasant was individualized as a peasant just as a knight, with the set attributes of "courteisie, noblesse, vertue and largesse" and the prescribed schedule of adventure, realised himself in terms of the properties which differentiate the various species. It is logically deduced that by virtue of the very fact that "a person was identical with his role in society, he was a peasant, an artisan, a knight, and not an individual who happened to have this or that occupation" (Erich Fromm). This individuality was, then, the membership of a class, to whose rules one was to conform, and it was this sense of conformity to the rules of the game, this feeling of community that instilled the awareness of the individual as one of the upholders of social stability, not as *the* upholder or *the* preserver.

It is this consciousness of the individual as a part of the community existence, of a unified group-entity, that makes Arthur comment when the Green Knight flings his challenge :

I know no gome þat is gast of þy grete wordes ; /Gif me now  
þy geserre, vpon Godez halue, /And I schal baypen þy bone  
þat þou boden habbes. (I. 325-327)

Arthur here assumes the role of 'the *gouverneur* of is *gyng*' (225), the representative speaking for the class, and in one of the preceding lines (253), Arthur chooses to introduce himself to the Green Knight in the following terms :

Wyze, welcum iwys to þis place,  
þe hede of þis ostel Arthour I hat ; (I. 252-253)

He is not King Arthur, but the head of the house, and the head implies the existence of the other organs which, though directed by the head, make up the complete existence, the organic whole. The relationship could not have been better expressed. It should also be noticed that the stranger throws his challenge not to Arthur or one particular knight, isolated from the others, but to any of the gathering of 'the worthiest the world has bred', whose fame has provoked him to put it to test. The silent court is baited with such words which once more reveal the same awareness on the part of the challenger. He does not address it to Arthur alone :

'What, is þis Arþures hous', Quoþ þe haþel þenne,  
'þat al þe rous rennes of þurȝ ryalmes so mony' ?  
Where is now *your* sourquydrye and *your* conquestes,  
Your gryndellayk and *your* greme, and *your* grete wordes ?

Now is þe reuel and þe renoun of þe Round Table  
 Overwalt wyth a worde of *on wyzes speche*,  
 For al dares for drede withoute dynt schewed !. (I. 309-315)

It is addressed to a collective body which is opposed to the one man—on wyze, threatening to disturb the poise, secured and preserved by the collected effort of an organic unit. When Arthur takes up the challenge to preserve the honour, not of the individual, but of the Round Table, he does so not as the liege, but as the head of the group. By virtue of his very position in the social structure he cannot but accept the challenge, 'And I schal baypen þy þone þat þou boden habbes' (227). The 'I' thus is not so much the first person singular, it is to be seen as one of the inseparable parts of the third person plural 'we'.

When Gawain volunteers to be given the game, he duly excuses himself—

'Wolde ge, worþilych lorde', quof Wawan to þe Kyng,  
 Bid me boze fro þis benche, and stonde by yow þere,  
 þat I wythoute vylanye myȝt voyde þis table  
 And þat my legge lady lyked not ille,  
 I wolde com to your counseyl bfore your cort ryche.  
 (I. 342-46)

Here once more is the implicit recognition of the pattern of a rigid society which binds the constituent parts with the chains of manners and customs which might have been devised as one of the various means to curb the naturally selfish instincts of man, to trim the egocentric tendencies and make him co-operate with society "as a rational construction to restrain the forces threatening complete or at least partial annihilation". But these customs and manners had extended from mere strictures to the norms of the courtly life automatically assimilated by each of the members. With Gawain there is another obligation, besides that of membership, it is of kinship.

Fo me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,  
 þer such an askyng is heuened so hyze in your sale,  
 þaz ge ȝourselþ be talenttyf, to take hit to yourseluen,  
 Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,  
 þat vnder heuen I hope non hazer of wylle,  
 Ne better bodyes on bent þer baret is rered.  
 I am þe wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,



And lest lur of my lyf, quo laytes þe soþe—  
Bot for as much as ȝe ar myn em I am only to prayse,  
No bounté bot your blod I in my bodé knowe.  
And syben bis note is so nys bat noȝt his you falles,  
And I have frayned hit at yow fyrst, foldez hit to me ;  
(I. 348-54)

An analysis of the speech shows that Gawain's begging of the game is more in the nature of an obligation than a choice, because it is not 'seemly' that the king should volunteer when the worthy knights are present, and if it falls to the knights, Gawain should be the first claimant since he bears Arthur's blood. Rousseau later saw the community as the source of values, so it is to Gawain and his peers who not only imbibe those values but are also its trustees. This sense of trusteeship as a member of a class of society is reinforced by Gawain's personal bond to Arthur, his uncle, who in his turn seems to accept this bond as valid as he addresses him as 'Cosyn'.

## II

The poet, after having established the unnatural character of the tryst, gradually unfolds the character of the knight who is to meet his 'marvellous opponent'. In his virtues and attributes Gawain is one of the many knights of the age, whom the poet knew. If the Anglo-Saxon age upheld physical valour and fidelity to the lord as sacrosanct, it was with the implicit purpose of strengthening the pillars of a nebulous society threatened with invasion. The social necessities create certain values which are handed over to the individual and sometimes modify psychology. The individual thus becomes a product of social, historical and political forces which shape the contours of culture. Courtesy, courage, good faith, generosity, loyalty, moderation, bravery, chastity, all are qualities that emerge from a scheme of social and moral values accepted axiomatically. It is being a bit insensitive to believe that the poet "ostentatiously neglects to describe his hero exercising the conventional knightly virtue—courage"<sup>6</sup>—, since Gawain's trial is spiritual as well. The initial move, i.e. the acceptance of the unequal challenge cannot but speak of courage, the typical knightly virtue. The poet embarks conventions and known truths to reach far distant shores of significance.

So Gawain—in this specific role—is simply acting as a unit in the social organism, with the aid of the furnished physical and moral

accessories like courage and courtesy. In his acceptance of the challenge, in his journey towards his fatal destiny, in his further trysts, in his resistance to temptations, Gawain is an epitome of the medieval courtly virtues. If one is permitted to use the much-used term of the Existentialists, Gawain throughout exposes his 'unauthentic self' which is the outcome of his heredity, environment and society, and is therefore objective and typical.

This individual, then, as objective and typical, is predetermined by a certain society with a fixed culture-pattern, with little liberty of choice. Gawain had been entrusted with the adventure only when he claimed it to be his, but his seeming choice appears more to be a sort of obligation, since, as mentioned before, he is triply bound to his lord as a subject to the king, a servant to the head and a nephew to his uncle. If the first two obligations are in his blood, unconsciously admitted and accepted as the existence of that fluid in his body, Gawain is aware of the third—"I am only to prayse/No bounté bot your blod I in my bodé knowe." It is this, that determines his choice, which is more an illusion of a choice and actually a commitment to his king, to his kin and to his society; and he must earn his keep.

### III

An anticipation of the impending tragedy looms large over the feast which Arthur arranges in the honour of Gawain, in the parting words of his comrades and in the "watery tears that whelmed from weeping eyes". But Gawain shows a resigned acceptance for he feels himself "...boun to þe bur.." and this sense of submission is all the more pronounced in his consequent summing up of the human situation—"What may mon do bot fonde?" (665) This comment reveals the speaker's awareness of the individual's predicament in a world with which he is familiar and at the same time leads us to suspect that though society might have moulded the behaviour pattern for the so-called unauthentic self, the individual cannot always identify himself with society. Such identification on the part of Gawain would not have led to such a resigned generalization. This prospect presumes the existence of some area of experience and reaction which remains beyond the reach of such moulding forces like society or culture. The unauthentic self is not the complete version of the individual, who, as Jaspers points out, breaks through the crust only after some fundamental experience like suffering, guilt or death exposes the authentic side. The perfect knight who ignored death and

resisted flesh, yields to the temptation of a girdle. Adventures and temptations were a part of the world of the knight. These were the expected experiences to which the reaction also was set. But the Gawain-poet, in spite of apparently being so conventional, can afford lines where there is a regret for an 'adventure rashly taken', and omits descriptions of unnatural deeds so common to the genre. The last might be his "ironic critique on the lurid excesses of the genre of Romance?", but both are uncharacteristic of Romance literature. More 'un-romantic' is perhaps Gawain's unheroic feat of accepting the girdle. Here once more the poet, who, in pursuance of the generic canon, had built up a world full of snares and traps for the hero to detect and successfully overcome at the grand climax of the poem, makes the hero stumble over a trifle green girdle and sneakishly indulge in a breach of promise. The strong fortification built up by his five wits and other moral and spiritual virtues, endowed by society and such other factors, collapses at the slightest provocation. The threat of destruction, the gnawing fear of the unknown end, pull down the facade to reveal the true self, the man as a bare animal afraid of annihilation, the bare man craving for self-preservation, an instinct initiating the three-fold violation (of the knightly vows, of the deal regarding the exchange of the gifts, of his implicit allegiance to his host, which may be paralleled to the three-fold obligations initiating the acceptance of the game). No version of an individual, in whatever set-up and situation, can be more authentic. Gawain refuses to be an epitome of conventional virtues by unheroically succumbing to one of the primitive instincts common to his species. But he transcends the animal instinct by realising and then admitting "for care of py knokke cowardyse ne tazt.

To acorde me with couetyse, my kynde to forsake,  
þat is larges and lewte þat longez to knyztet.

Now am I fawty and falce, and ferde haf ben euer  
Of trecherye and vntrawpe :” (IV, 2379-83)

Gawain, it seems, "sees his sin in the orthodox manner enjoined by medieval penitential doctrine,"<sup>8</sup> and is absolved by confession and penance. This acknowledgement not only restores his moral and spiritual validity by virtue of which he is a member of a class, but also confirms him as the "fautlest freke þat euer on fote zede." The compliment does not estimate him as the perfection of all abstract virtues and values, but evaluates him with reference to those properties which may be found in men who tread on earth. The same practical evaluation in terms of applied values, as opposed to pure and therefore abstract, is again

discerned in another statement of the Green Knight : "þou forth þryngez/  
Among prynces of prys." Gawain, if he stands supreme, does so only  
among 'prynces' honoured by society. So even in his triumph he is made  
to remain very much earth-bound, recognizable throughout in a realistic  
background.

#### IV

As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,  
So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oþer gay knyhtez (IV, 2365)

Gawain has been paid the last and perhaps the best tribute by his 'enmy  
kene' who compares him to a pearl, not set in black velvet to shine all the  
more by contrast, but among white peas, among forms which appear like  
a pearl. The society, for the sake of its own stability maintains a  
semblance of homogeneous appearance, where the white pea and pearl  
deceive the eye, though the intrinsic difference, the difference of value and  
worth remains. This is the society which so much believes in uniformity,  
(however apparent it might be) emphasises the form (though there may be  
qualitative demarcations), and this social force as a great leveller would  
not allow Gawain to monopolise the girdle as a token of his shame and  
thereby alienate himself from the community which believes in joint enter-  
prise. It would also be well to remember that Morgan la Fay had devised  
the game—

For to assay þe surquidre,' zif hit soth were  
þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Round table (2457),

and not for Gawain specifically. The girdle is therefore readily assim-  
ilated as a baldric which "vehe burne of þe broþerhede.....schuldi haue."  
and thus the individual, once more back within the social precincts, is  
engulfed by the common "unauthentic" social identity that smudges  
all "authentic" differences to people the world with appearances all  
alike.

This is the medieval world where the individual dwells securely  
fortified with known and ready values, as a member of a class with certain  
obligations to fulfil for social stability and consequently self-preservation.  
Gawain is re-created in a medieval world, to act as a typical medieval  
knight with his steadfast allegiance to his vows and unquestioning  
acknowledgement of his social bondage. Yet behind the medieval armour  
hides the universal man who transcends the confines of the age by his  
human limitation.

# REFERENCES

All text references are to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*—edited by Tolkein & Gordon (2nd ed. Norman Davis).

1. For some such details see ll 568-88 ; 853-59 ; 884-93.
2. Penguin trans.
3. Note 73 of the text, ed. by Tolkein & Gordon.
4. *The Long Revolution*, Raymond Williams.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Penguin trans.—'Gawains Eternal Jewel.'
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*

## A RECENTLY DISCOVERED DARIUS INSCRIPTION

SUBHADRA KUMAR SEN

THE French Archeological Delegation in Iran discovered in 1972-'73 a new inscription of Darius I (522-486 B.C.) and a colossal statue of the King. This headless statue of the Achaemenian epoch, measuring more than 2.40 metres from the base of the pedestal to the chest represents King Darius, clad in traditional Persian royal robe, is decorated with quadrilingual inscription. The Egyptian version is on the left side and the Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian versions are on the right.

Here we publish the Old Persian version in normalized transcription with Sanskrit and English renderings. For some of the Sanskrit words I am indebted to Dr. Sukumar Sen.

1. бага vazrka Ahur[amaz]dāh hya imām b[ūm]im adā hya avam  
asmānam adā hya martiyam adā, šyātim [adā marti]yahya hya  
Dārayava(h)um xšāyaθyam akunauš. iyam patikara aθa(n)gaina.
2. tyam Dārayavahuš xšāyaθya niyaštāya<sup>v</sup> cartanaiy Mudrāyaiy  
avahyarādiy hyašim aparam vaināti avahya [azdā bavā]tiy ty  
Pārsa martiya Mudrāyam adāriy. adam Dārayavahuš
3. xšāyaθya vazrka xšāyaθya-xšāyaθyanām xšāyaθ[ya dahyūnām]  
xšāyaθya ahyāyā būmiya vazrkāya Vištāspahya
4. puša Haxamanišya. θāti Dārayavahuš xša[yaθya : mām]  
Ahuramazdāh pātuvuta tyamai krtam.
1. bhagaḥ vajrkah asuramedhaḥ syaḥ imām bhūmim adhāt syaḥ  
\*avam aśmānam adhāt syaḥ martyam adhāt \*cyātim adhāt  
martyasya syaḥ Dhārayavasum \*kšāyathyam akṛṇot. iyam  
(=ayam) \*patikaraḥ aśaṅgeṇaḥ
2. tyam Dhārayavasuh \*kšāyathyaḥ \*nyasthāpayat \*cartane  
\*Mudrāye \*avasya-rādhi syaḥ+\*sim aparam \*Pārsa martyaḥ  
\*Mudrāyam adhāri(=adhārayat). adam Dhārayavasuh
3. \*kšāyathyaḥ \*vajrkah \*kšāyathyaḥ \*kšāyathyanām \*kšāyathyaḥ  
dasyūnām \*kšāyathyaḥ asyāḥ bhūmyāḥ \*vajrkāyāḥ Vištāśvasya

4. putraḥ Sakhāmanīṣyaḥ + śamsati Dhāryavasuh \*kṣāyathyaḥ :  
mām Asuramedhāḥ pātū uta tyat-me kṛtam.
1. Great god (is) Ahuramazda, who created this land, who created that sky, who created mankind, who created happiness for mankind, who made Darius King. This image is made of stone
2. which Darius the King insisted to be made (lit. to do) in Egypt for this reason (that) whoever in future shall look upon it (it) shall be clear to him that a Persian man possessed Egypt.  
I Darius
3. great king, king of kings, king of countries, king of this great land, of Hystaspes
4. son, Achaemenian. Says Darius the King : "May Ahuramazda protect me and what (has been) done by me."

## NOTES

In this inscription no new word occurs. Only some new forms of known words are attested. These words are listed below.

patikara : nom. sg. m. 'image'.

vaināti : subj. active 3 sg.

adāriy : aor. pass 3 sg. passive used for the active. It is perhaps a scribal error for adāraya.

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- Vallat, F. *La triple inscriptions cunéiforme de la statue de Darius I<sup>er</sup> (D. Sab)*, Revue Assyriologie (1974).
- Sen. S. *Old Persian Inscriptions of the Achaemenian Emperors*, Calcutta University 1941.

## ERRATA

'amōmēton d' o'uden 'egento brotois

Contents	Read 'Cresseid'.
P. 19, l. 19	Insert colon after 'Horatio'.
P. 20, l. 9	Read 'many-'.
P. 24, l. 2	Read 'viśwaviheen'.
Pp. 65, 67, 68	For 4, 5, 6, 7 (in the footnotes) read 3, 4, 5, 6.
P. 68, l. 6	Insert comma after 'story' :
P. 71, l. 8	After 'mankind' insert footnote reference number 7.
P. 71, l. 17	Omit comma after 'love'.



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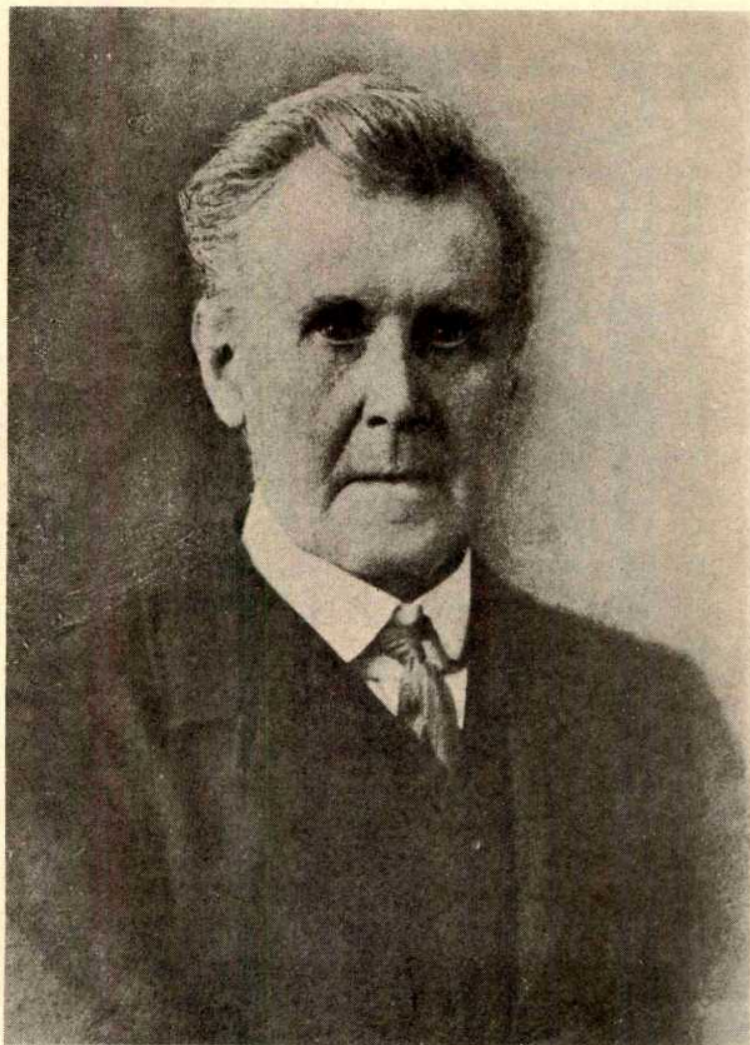
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Born 1849

Died 1927

By courtesy of  
Scottish Church College.

## IN MEMORIAM

---

SUSHIL KUMAR MUKHERJEE

PROFESSOR Henry Stephen was born in 1849 in Lumsden, a bleak upland parish in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. In the Parish school his teacher was James Tindal who had taught a number of distinguished students. He graduated in 1870 from Aberdeen University with Honours in Classical Literature and Mental Philosophy. He then took his course in Divinity in the Free Church Theological College in Aberdeen. He went to Germany for further studies. Returning to Scotland he took up teaching.

Henry Stephen came to India in January 1882 when he joined the staff of the Free Church Institution at Nimtola Ghat Street in North Calcutta (the present Jorabagan Thana building). Free Church Institution was then a rival to Duff College, founded by the Rev. Alexander Duff which was originally called The General Assembly's Institution. When the two colleges united in 1908 to become the Scottish Churches College (now Scottish Church College) Henry Stephen continued as teacher of English and Philosophy. Here he taught till his retirement in 1913. Sir Asutosh Mukherjee invited Professor Stephen to join the University Department of English. In 1914 Professor Stephen joined the Post-Graduate Department and taught till 1927. He became the Head of the Department in 1919, after Professor Robert Knox. In 1921 the University of Calcutta conferred upon him the distinction of Doctor of Philosophy. Earlier, in 1914, Aberdeen University had made him Doctor of Theology.

Dr Stephen died on September 1, 1927 in a Nursing Home in Calcutta, at Elysium Row. He was 78.

By virtue of his outstanding qualities as a teacher and as a man, his prodigious learning and saintly character, Dr Henry Stephen has become a legendary name in the academic world. In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of his death, this volume of the journal of the English Department is dedicated to his sacred memory.

## HENRY STEPHEN

---

JAMES WATT

A CALCUTTA newspaper writing of Dr Henry Stephen stated that his kingdom lay north of Cornwallis Square, that south of that he was little known. It must have somewhat astonished the writer to read of the act of respect towards this little known man when the Corporation of Calcutta stood for a few seconds to mark their appreciation of his services to education in Bengal. His pupils are scattered over the whole of India, they are to be found everywhere in Bengal, and their affection for and reverence towards him are well known to his closer friends.

His shy, reserved manner made it difficult to learn much of his earlier years. One would have liked to know what sort of school-master they had in that upland sparsely peopled parish on Donside in Aberdeenshire who could so well prepare his pupils for the University....Henry Stephen graduated from Aberdeen University in 1870 with double Honours—in Classical Literature and Mental Philosophy. He took his course in Divinity in the Free Church Theological College in Aberdeen, but, so far as is known, did not go forward to license. Thereafter he studied in Germany and for a time was engaged in teaching in Scotland.

Mr George Smith, Secretary, F. M. C. used to claim that it was he that prevailed on Mr Stephen to go to India and in January 1882 he joined the Staff of the Free Church Institution, Nimtola Ghat Street, and found himself in work to which he could give himself with heart and soul. He continued his work in Philosophy and English in the united college—Scottish Churches College—until 1913 when he joined the Staff in the University Post-Graduate Classes in English. He continued in this work until the end of the last session when he was laid aside by sickness.

He was happy in his College classes and in the old strenuous days in the Free Church Institution, when ways and means had to be most carefully husbanded, he often taught hour after hour throughout the

day. And to that he added extra hours for backward or for brilliant students in the mornings and evenings. His method of teaching was peculiar. The high-pitched voice, repeating and re-repeating clause by clause, sentence by sentence, the continuous movement on the platform as he added every now and then the heads of his lecture on the black-board, his patience and the unwearied toil which he willingly incurred in helping his students at every stage, left their mark on them in a notable fashion. Other methods of teaching may tend to develop the ablest students in a more effective fashion, but the ordinary student understood him and believed that no other teacher came within sight of him. If they failed to pass, they held that the fault lay with the University for they had answered the questions according to Stephen and that was enough.

He had studied Botany and Zoology and not only used these subjects freely in illustration in his own subjects but directed the studies of private students in them. He had an eager interest in Astronomy and one might often find him late at night with his telescope on the roof of the College. His interest in physical knowledge seemed to stop short of electricity and of chemistry, but it was always dangerous to assume ignorance of department of knowledge because of his silence.

He did not take part in the regular Scripture teaching in the College except when the Staff was very short, or on special occasions, but most of us were accustomed to hear from students and former students that he was the best Christian missionary among us.

He recognised very early that the administrative work in a College was not his work and he returned to his many classes without regret.

His own University of Aberdeen in recognition of his work in India conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity and in 1921 the Calcutta University conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. His many students, up and down northern India, will ever think of him with affection and not a few of them with gratitude as they recall the gifts, so unobtrusively given, which made higher education possible for them. In the best sense they sat at his feet, they learned from his words and admired his patient unselfish character.

It was thoroughly characteristic of the man that no persuasion

even by his own students could secure his presence in a class-group and the result is that only two photographs of his tall, somewhat unusual figure can be found. He enjoyed extra-ordinarily good health throughout his long residence in Calcutta and the simple Spartan habits which he had learned in his childhood he never gave up. He passed away in a nursing home on the evening of 1st September at the age of 79 years and his friends said farewell on Friday morning in the Scottish cemetery to the silent, somewhat lonely man whom they had known for years and had loved.

## DR STEPHEN

---

ADITYANATH MOOKHERJEE

I FIRST came to know Dr Stephen in 1892 when I joined the First Year Class of the Duff College...Dr Stephen...took upon himself, in addition to his own duties as Acting Principal and Professor of English and Philosophy, the greater part of the work of two teachers (on furlough). He was in sole charge of B. A. Philosophy, Pass and Honours. The teaching of English, Pass and Honours Courses, also largely fell to his share. Those who had the good fortune of attending his lectures on the dramas of Shakespeare will readily recall how he enabled them to enter into the mind of the poet and appreciate and enjoy his genius.

...In the First Year we read with him Scott's *Rokeby*...He had all the qualities which constitute a really great scholar and a successful teacher : he could most easily bend to the level of his class. In his explanation of the text he chose the simplest expressions and when he dictated notes, he wrote them—as he invariably did except in the case of his M. A. classes—on the blackboard. A great linguist and a rich classical scholar, his notes specially excelled in the philological element. When we first began to study Philology in the Third Year (English Honours Course) we found that Dr Stephen had already made us fairly familiar in the First Year stage with the essentials of the subject.

As Professor of Philosophy Dr Stephen felt the difficulty and inconvenience of being required to lecture on certain prescribed text-books, not exactly suited to the needs and capacity of his classes. There were difficulties of language and difficulties of ideas. Syllabuses comprising the fundamental topics of a subject were unknown in those days. But Dr Stephen solved the difficulties in a way which is only possible to one whose knowledge of the subject is at least equal to that of the author whose views are being explained. He would rearrange the topics of the text-book in his own way and express them in his own way too, avoiding, as far as accuracy would permit,

all technical expressions and enriching his notes with his own illustrations and analogies which were most happily chosen and which made the meaning plain even to the dullest intellect. But the most stimulating, and to certain students most valuable, feature of his notes was their suggestiveness ; after completing his explanation of the views of an author or his exposition of a philosophical doctrine, he would add a few critical queries on their accuracy and soundness, leading the student to think for himself and form his own conclusion. To help the student he would refer to parallel views or to opposite views, and show by a brief but acute analysis, that a superficially identical view was really opposed to, and that an apparently opposite view when reduced to its simplest terms was really identical with, the view expounded in the notes. These profoundly suggestive queries and criticisms he would direct to be enclosed in square brackets so that the continuity of his exposition might not be disturbed. These notes which were composed extempore, while faithfully analysing, simplifying and summarising the contents of a text-book, were in a sense independent and original treatises taking the students much further into the heart of the subject by ways perfectly smooth and pleasant.

Latterly he threw a portion of these lecture-notes into a more systematic form, and the result was a number of standard works in Philosophy unsurpassed as regards the mode of presentation of philosophical problems and the soundness of their treatment. The *Principles of Psychology*, the *Principles of Ethics*, the *Principles of Logic*, and the *Problems of Metaphysics* have removed the obstacles to the study of a highly abstruse subject which discourage and repel the beginner. The result of very long teaching experience in one of the biggest Colleges in India, these books are pre-eminently adapted to the requirements of Indian students. The very prolixity of the style and the treatment was deliberately adopted by the author. His opinion was that if the same thing be repeated several times in different words, the repetition would not only help in impressing upon the mind of the student clear and definite ideas about a subject which abounds in vague and abstract generalisations but by supplying him with an abundant vocabulary would dispense with the necessity of cram.

Dr Stephen conducted his M. A. classes in Philosophy three days in the week in the morning from seven to half-past eight in 2, Corn-

wallis Square. I have mentioned the details of his College timetable to show Dr Stephen's enormous capacity for work. If the prescribed texts were common to two classes and the classes were small—as were the B. A. Honours and the M. A. classes—he joined them. Two graduates of the College were employed to dictate his notes written by him overnight, so that when he was lecturing to one class, he was also lecturing vicariously to two other classes. That was the way in which he managed to carry on the work of the College till the full strength of the staff was restored by the arrival of Dr Hector and Mr Telfer after the Puja vacation.

The relaxation which he sought from this heavy strain was in keeping with his scholarly habits. It did not consist in absolute rest but in change of occupation. Though not a book-worm his appetite for reading was insatiable. He had a fine collection of books which were mostly foreign classics—Greek, Latin, Hebrew, German, French, Italian, Spanish and the like. He was a true lover of books....There was not a single book in his big library that he had not carefully read. Any one taking down a book from a shelf would have noticed that passages here and there were marked by two thin parallel strokes in the margin. Most of his readings he did in the artificial light of the lamp, and this latterly affected his eye-sight.

Another form of recreation was derived from the microscope and the telescope. His knowledge of Botany and Astronomy was that of a specialist in these subjects. Several students of the Duff College took their Master's Degree in Botany under the pilotage of Dr Stephen...He had a passion for studying the stars. After sunset he would plant and adjust his telescope on the terrace and watch the movements of heavenly bodies, sometimes for the most part of a night. Occasionally he would invite his students to his house and explain to them the marvels of Astronomy...

Dr Stephen took plenty of physical exercise. When lecturing he walked up and down in the open space in front of his class. He would every now and then straighten up his body and bend it slightly backwards to counteract the tendency towards stooping and the bowed shoulders so characteristic of the confirmed bookworm. In the early days of cycling he kept a tricycle on which he rambled about in the northern suburbs of the town, the fine gardens belonging to the Jain temples at Ultadingi being one of his favourite resorts. With the



introduction of the safety bicycle he became an enthusiastic cyclist. He gave up cycling some twenty years ago when he met with a rather serious accident in Dhurumtola Street opposite the Chandney Chawk.

... He was persuaded by the late Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, to join the Post-Graduate Staff as Professor of English. For reasons of health he had to sever his connection with the University last May. The resolution of the Senate and the speech of the present Vice-Chancellor show grateful appreciation of his splendid services to the Post-Graduate Department. His last work written a few months before he passed away was a substantial volume on *Poetics*. And to the Vice-Chancellor who went to see him when he was lying ill in the Presidency General Hospital, his request was that every college teacher of English might be presented with a copy of that work.

His love for his pupils was genuine and deep, and his pupils regarded him with feelings of deepest reverence and affection. A request from students he could hardly refuse... Every session he paid the college fees of several poor students, sometimes he would buy them their text-books, and on one occasion he gave four hundred rupees to one of his ex-students to help him to rebuild his thatched house which had been burnt down... But assistance in every case was given with utmost secrecy, and the manner of rendering it never hurt the feelings of the recipients.

Dr Stephen possessed another quality very rare among Europeans living in India... He was quite unconscious of the distinction between a black skin and a white one... He was likewise entirely and absolutely free from any kind of religious bigotry and aggressiveness which is inseparable from intellectual shallowness. His culture was as wide as it was deep, and the outcome of such a culture dissolved all dogmatism and created in him a genuine spirit of toleration... He was perfectly free from partiality in his treatment of Christians and non-Christians. In his dealings with his fellow human beings, in his appreciation of the schools of thought, Indian and European, he was not in the least influenced by differences of caste and creed. Such elasticity of the understanding, such uncompromising fidelity to truth, such urbanity of temperament, have always been the marks of great minds. This explains why this teacher from remote Scotland easily won for himself a much nearer

and more secure place in the hearts of his students than many teachers of their own race and creed.

Another feature of Dr Stephen's nature was that though he lived in the closest touch with his students and colleagues, he also lived an inward life of his own, isolated and insulated, to which it was difficult to get access....He noticed everything about him with a most observant eye but like those who know most and say least he would never say anything about his personal views beyond what was demanded by common courtesies and conventionalities. His reticence was invincible and impenetrable. He had in him a very strong dash of the Stoic sage ; stoicism in the noblest sense of the term entered largely into the composition of his personality. In his farewell speech to the students of his College, his advice to them was summed up in two short sentences : "Do your duty". "Fear no man"...He was a philosopher who not only loved Philosophy but lived it. His own life—simple and beautiful, deeply inward but also outward and heavenward, wrapped in his own contemplation but at the same time lovingly consecrated to the service of others—suggests and illustrates the trend of his own practical philosophy.

His own philosophical views he never pushed forward or thrust upon any one. If directly asked as to his personal views on any philosophical problem he would begin very modestly with one theory and pile upon it other theories of every shade of differences, whether of agreement or of opposition, explaining and criticising each theory as he proceeded and leaving the questioner to form his own conclusion on the subject. The personal element he carefully effaced... He was very fond of the works of Carlyle and Coleridge. He was profoundly impressed by the poetry of Wordsworth. He thought that Wordsworth was "the first British thinker who, without being taught by any one, gave expression to the idealistic movement of the nineteenth century."

Many have thought that by coming out to India Dr Stephen sacrificed his career as a thinker of world-wide reputation. I too was of this opinion. But as I came to know him more and more, I had to alter it. He always avoided publicity. His repugnance to the limelight was a deep-seated characteristic of his nature which was composed of the finest and most delicate qualities. His exquisitely sensitive nature found peace and repose in solitude...

... I, therefore, doubt if he would have emerged out of the comparative obscurity in which he buried himself in India even if he had remained in Europe. It is doubtful if any 'kindly coercion' would have succeeded in drawing him out of himself. His reticence, his modesty, and his standard of perfection were obstacles in the way which no kindly coercion could have overcome. From this it must not be supposed that he had in him a certain obstinacy or "dourness."..On the contrary his was a most genial personality, full of that genuine kindness and mellowness which can only come from deep reflection on life—its meaning and its problems.

Dr Stephen blended in him the saint and the savant. His love of seclusion remained with him to the end. Up to the very last moment he was anxious that the news of his illness might not spread. For nearly five months he endured, with perfect resignation and cheerfulness, the sufferings inflicted by the fatal disease...And when he passed away, not one of his many thousand pupils and ex-pupils were permitted by fate to pay the tribute of their love and reverence for their dear Master by following his remains to their final resting place. Perhaps it was as well as this was so ; such privacy was quite in keeping with that love of seclusion and self-effacement which characterised his whole life. He loved the people of Bengal and with them he left his bones.

Professor HENRY STEPHEN  
—As I Remember

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RAGHABENDRA NATH BANERJEE

IN PAYING my respectful homage to Professor Henry Stephen, my teacher in Scottish Churches College (1911-13), I recall here a few incidents still vivid in my recollection. Professor Stephen was a saintly teacher who was held in great reverence by all who came near him for his charming personality and love for students.

Professor Stephen lived in a big room on the first floor of the College. He led a very simple life, but exercised tremendous influence on his students with his kind and gentle manners and a heavenly smile.

When I was a student I told my father about the saintly character of our professor of Philosophy, how he used to feed the flying birds, including crows, with crumbs of bread when they perched on his body as he sat on the open terrace in front of his room. My father, Rai Gopal Ch. Banerjee Bahadur, a distinguished judge, was an orthodox Hindu and a firm believer in the Hindu Shastras. He was so impressed to hear the virtues of Professor Stephen that he wanted to meet him one day. So I arranged an interview. My father took some flowers with him which, after his talks, he placed at the feet of my professor as a mark of reverence, much to the latter's surprise and embarrassment. Before Professor Stephen could speak anything, my father told him that he had conquered all human passions and had raised himself to such a spiritual height that birds and beasts came near him without fear. He had, therefore, shown his reverence for a saint in the usual Hindu tradition.

In 1913 there was a social function to be held at the Dundas Hostel in which Professor Stephen was to be the Chief Guest. The students who loved him very much, had planned, without his knowledge, to take him to the function in a carriage drawn by themselves. My eldest brother, late Dr J. N. Banerjee, a renowned doctor of the time, had an ivory-white carriage which I arranged for this

purpose. At the appointed time on the day of the function, many students had assembled in front of the College gate. Professor Stephen who wanted to walk the short distance was persuaded to sit inside the carriage. When he did so the horses were removed and the students started pulling the carriage. Taken by surprise, Professor Stephen attempted to jump out, but was prevented. The students told him, that they only wanted to show their love and respect for their teacher in this way. As far as I remember, the leading part in this affair was taken by Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, Nirmal Kumar Siddhanta, Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee, Nirmal Chandra Chatterjee, Priyanath Sen, and myself. All my friends who later became eminent in their respective spheres, are gone. The only survivors are Priyanath Sen, Barrister-at-Law, and myself.

I remember another incident. Professor Stephen was Head Examiner in one of our examinations, in 1913. Some students managed to enter his room in his absence, just to see, if possible, the marks obtained by them. But Professor Stephen appeared all on a sudden and enquired what they were doing in his room in his absence. The students felt very small and could not give any satisfactory explanation. The few words that the professor spoke on the occasion brought tears to the eyes of his students who left the room quietly, promising that they would never do such a thing again.

Professor Stephen was the President of the Dramatic Union of the College. He expressed great appreciation of the performance of "Othello" by the students in the College Hall, in 1912, and wrote a report in the Magazine giving high praise to the performers. He was so pleased with my rendering of the role of Othello that when I approached him for a certificate after I left the College, he made a special mention of my excellence in English, which, however, was far from truth. It was his immense love for his students that prompted him to exaggerate the merit of his students for their future benefit in the field of employment. Modest in all things, he was lavish in his praise for his students.

Professor Stephen's habits were remarkably simple. He never cared for his dress, though he was neat and clean. He never combed his hair. But his students maintained perfect silence in his class. Professor Stephen avoided publicity. He never allowed his photo to be taken. He used to say that it would only spoil the camera.

## A PROFESSOR'S PROFILE

—Reminiscences of an old student.

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ANIMESH CHANDRA RAY CHOUDHURY

A TALL wiry person with tousled hair in a frayed and faded suit was standing on the tram track in front of the old book stalls on College Street, just outside the Presidency College campus, which were his favourite haunt and hunting ground after college hours. Recognising him at once from a short distance as Professor Stephen of the Post-graduate Department of English which I had joined a few days before, in 1917, after passing out of the Scottish Churches College, and espying a tram car fast coming on towards him, I cried, "Please move off the line, Sir ; there's a tram car coming." He was intently poring over a book which I had every reason to believe he must have picked up from one of the book stalls nearby. Waking up as if from a reverie, he asked me, "Where am I, Mister ?" (Incidentally, I might say that Dr Stephen had the peculiar habit, or rather idiosyncrasy, of repeating "Mr" several times in course of conversation with his pupils). "Sir", I said, "you're standing right on the tram-line and there's a tram car coming on". "Where are you going, Mr ?", he asked me. "Sir, I'm going to Dalhousie Square". "I'm also going to Dalhousie Square", he said. Dr Stephen was then living in Spence's Hotel, off Dalhousie Square.

We boarded the same first class compartment in the tram car which was filled to its utmost capacity mostly by students from colleges in North and Central Calcutta. Many of them stood up out of respect to Dr Stephen who was a familiar figure in College Square in those days. But Dr Stephen could by no means be persuaded to occupy any of the many vacant seats offered to him. When I earnestly requested him to occupy one of the seats, he repeated several times, "How can I sit down, Mr, while you're standing, Mr ?" The car moved on to Dalhousie with most of the student passengers standing, out of respect for a revered professor. It was indeed a sight to see !

This was my first introduction to Dr Stephen. He took me to his flat in Spence's Hotel, and cordially invited me to repeat my visit whenever I had any difficulty. I had had occasional glimpses of Dr Stephen during my I. A. studies in the Scottish Churches College (1913-15) when he was Professor of Philosophy there, before joining the Post-graduate Department of the Calcutta University. During my post-graduate studies, I remember the then Vice-Chancellor, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee making a remark that Dr Stephen was by far the most learned and versatile European scholar-philosopher he had come across during his long association with the Calcutta University. Coming out to India to join the Free Church Institution, he became Head of the Department of Philosophy in the united College, named Scottish Churches College. I remember how during our Pass Course studies in Philosophy in the Scottish Churches College, the late Dr Urquhart strongly recommended Dr Stephen's three books on Philosophy,—Ethics, Metaphysics and Psychology as *vādè-mécum* for every student.

A few days after my first encounter with Dr Stephen, I received a letter from Professor William Douglas who had taught us English in the I. A. and B. A. classes for three years, before joining the newly-founded University of Rangoon as Head of the Departments of English and Philosophy. Professor Douglas had a soft corner for me in his heart. The letter I received enclosed another letter of introduction to Dr Stephen, strongly recommending me for a free-studentship during my post-graduate studies in the Calcutta University and requesting the learned Professor to help me in case of any difficulty. I remember how Dr Stephen secured for me a free-studentship by putting in a good word for me to Sir Asutosh.

Dr Stephen had the peculiar habit (that was also an idiosyncrasy for a Post-graduate Professor) of writing with a piece of chalk on a blackboard notes on difficult words and sentences in the text books he used to teach us. We often wondered why he treated us as undergraduate students who had just joined College. Perhaps he felt that those notes would be helpful for all students, good, bad or indifferent, who were intent on passing their examinations. As it is well-known, the majority of students are content with mere pass marks and only a small minority aspire for honours or distinction marks. Dr Stephen's certificates, given to even brilliant boys after they

passed their M.A. Examination, invariably carried a sentence which said, "He could follow teaching in English with profit".

One incident, out of many of my personal meetings with the learned Professor, will always remain in my memory. Once after college hours, I went to the University Library in search of some new books on Romantic Poetry. I had just picked up one and was deeply absorbed in reading Blake's Poem—*To The Muses*. I heard somebody behind my back reciting the poem with such gusto that I was compelled to look behind and see who it was. It was none other than Dr Stephen, who after finishing a recital of the entire poem from memory, told me how pleased he was to see me reading Blake who was a precursor of Shelley and the transcendentalists. Dr Stephen did not seem to care for anything that went round him. He had a look of other-worldliness, the true look of a philosopher, a total unconcern for mundane things. What charmed me and most of my contemporaries, was his child-like simplicity, unconventionality, spirit of dedication to the service of his students and the cause of the advancement of learning in our country. If he was great as a scholar and philosopher, he was still greater as a man. His heart overflowed with the milk of human kindness, particularly for his students whom he loved and served so sincerely and conscientiously for more than three decades. Dr Stephen was a life-long bachelor whose innumerable anonymous acts of charity were known only to those who had the privilege of coming in close contact with him.

He has left behind him no worldly riches but the imperishable legacy of noble thoughts, words and deeds, of teachings and writings which once inspired and should still continue to inspire generations of students.



*IN MEMORY OF*  
THE LATE PROFESSOR HENRY STEPHEN, D.D.

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JANAKINATH BANERJEE

DR Henry Stephen was known as a learned professor in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the earlier ones of the twentieth. That is how his memory is honoured. But not much is said or known about the saintly nature of his life and character. I give here my impressions about him from what I knew of him, as his student and also in later days.

Quiet, unassuming and self-effacing by nature, he carved out for himself his own "sequestered vale of life" amidst the bustle and din of city life. It was a higher atmosphere of serenity, learning, charity, compassion and loving kindness in which he lived and moved.

He had no family, no friends, no admirers to greet him in his lonely room at Spence's Hotel.

Speeches or orations he made none, wrote no magazine articles nor drew any admiring crowd. Fame and honour he counted as dust.

He cared little, it seemed, for what was happening around him. His sole concern appeared to have been his studies and the teaching of boys in his charge.

He became Head of the Department of English in the P.G. department of the University of Calcutta and had his room in Darbhanga Buildings where one could see him easily. In classroom he did not lecture or dictate notes, lest he should be misunderstood by any. Tall and comely but aging, with a duster in his left hand and a chalk pencil in the right, he mounted the dais and wrote down on the blackboard his notes which the boys copied. A collection of his lecture notes was later published by the University of Calcutta. I had a copy of this and read it with solace in leisure hours in after life. I am reminded in this connection of the late Professor Scrimgeour of the Scottish Churches College who also used to write down his valuable notes on the blackboard for boys to copy.

His learning was great—almost encyclopaedic—in literature, philosophy, etc. He wrote two books, one on Psychology and the other on Metaphysics, which I remember to have read in my undergraduate classes. He was an adornment to the Post-Graduate department, like Professor C. V. Raman, Professor S. Radhakrishnan and others.

If kind hearts are more than coronets, he was greater than kings. He was not a rich man, being only a salaried professor who had to pay bills for living in a European hotel and for buying books that he loved and needed most. Yet he scraped whatever he could to help the needy and the poor.

With bits of small coins in his pocket he would leave his residence in hotel before sunset and stroll out into the streets till he reached the maidan area where the football playing grounds are, facing the southern gate of the Government House. Another visitor to the area was Principal Girish Chandra Bose of Bangabasi College. He came for his evening constitutionals in a small carriage drawn by ponies and alighted at the northern end of the Red Road. With a stout stick in his hand, he walked rather briskly along the gravel path which was just outside the western boundary of the Red Road and terminated at the northern gate of Fort William. Dr Stephen was to be seen in this area but not in any fixed place or route. His walks were more like rambles which seemed to have no definite direction or destination, slow-moving and stopping at places or things that excited his curiosity, with his felt hat on and a stick hanging from his left arm. Beggar boys knew their "Sahib" who distributed the small bits of coin which he usually carried in his pockets for giving alms to the poor. The boys went away happy, 'salaming' him when they got their usual alms, Dr Stephen looking on smilingly.

'Yes, Mister', were the words ready on his lips to greet all those who approached him, and he was accessible to all. I once happened to need a certificate from him and he readily gave it. The wooden stairs of the Darbhanga Buildings, at one time, were in a bad way and needed early repair. An Audit Officer of the University, the late S. N. Bose, had to write in this regard an item for the agenda of a Syndicate meeting. Dr Stephen, then old and retired, happened to be passing at the time along the corridor in front of his room. Mr Bose went up straight to the Professor and asked him if he

could use the word "edging"—edging the steps—with plates of brass or steel. "What do you say, Mr ? Edging, edging the steps ?" he asked. "Oh, yes, it's quite right, quite right. You can use it." His sympathetic and obliging hand was open to all.

Pretensions to piety or spirituality he had none. My idea is that his heart was given to God, as his hands were given to fellowmen, and this sustained him in his loneliness. In my long life I have seen few men as saintly as he was. In this rude world he grew up like a blossoming flower spreading fragrance all around, and had in due time, his final repose in the lap of God.

He is in Heaven and I bow with reverence to his sacred memory.

## PROFESSOR HENRY STEPHEN : A TRIBUTE

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GOPAL HALDAR

I DO not presume to speak of the present, but in our days (1922-24) the University teachers of English were well-known scholars.

Professor Henry Stephen was the Head of the Department. A saintly man, he was then old. Due to age he retired from his old College where he had established his reputation as a Professor of Philosophy and was due to return home. At his farewell meeting Sir Asutosh Mukherjee was present and he persuaded the old professor to teach in the University. Professor Stephen had to agree, but he would not teach Philosophy and Sir Asutosh accepted him as a Professor of English.

When we were his students, the old professor visibly showed in his gait and general appearance some infirmities, but not in mind. He came regularly to his classes and taught his students in his own way and set apart a part of his salary as stipends for needy and worthy students. A few years later he died here.

When we knew him, he was still a well-built figure, a bit careless about his dress, but his eyes were failing, though there was still a gleam of affection in them. He was simple, dignified and calm, though a bit hesitant. He rarely spoke in his classes and wrote his day's lecture on the black-board with the help of a big magnifying glass. His handwriting was firm, bold and quite good. Occasionally, he gave advice, "Do not read books on books", "This is good", "This is bad."

His manner of teaching was direct and simple. The content only mattered. We studied with him the literature of the Romantic Revival, 1798 to 1832.

Only later we came to know how much the manner and content of his notes were due to his powers of simplification and clear exposition.

His slim volume on *Poetics* published in our day, by the Calcutta University, abundantly confirmed his reputation. In clearness, simplicity and lucidity, it was a treat in the interpretation of the Revival Period.

Perhaps from his long acquaintance with students, he gained the impression that literature is not all sound or smoke, froth or foam and it was necessary to make his students here appreciate this aspect.

To sum up, Professor Henry Stephen was not one who startled but who really enlightened his students.

## PROFESSOR HENRY STEPHEN

—a Savant with a difference

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RABINDRA NATH BOSE

THIS title may arouse some arguments and perhaps more questions. Our venerable Professor, had he been alive, would himself, most likely, have objected to it. As only a little is remembered, and as still less is known about his life, the appellation must be justified to those who never knew him. But there are still a few of the older generation to whom Professor Henry Stephen is well-known not only as a renowned teacher but also as a well-beloved figure in the academic world of Calcutta, first from 1882 to 1913, when he served as a teacher in the Free Church Institution, Duff College, and later the Scottish Churches College, and then from 1914 to 1927 when he taught in the Calcutta University.

He was "the grand old man of the University who taught three generations of students". This was the apt description of Dr Stephen by the then Vice-Chancellor, Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, while introducing him to the members of the Sadler Commission.

In September 1914 Professor Stephen was appointed the University Professor of English. A contemporary Daily wrote, 'It is understood that the University has secured the services of Professor Stephen who is going home just now but will be coming back in a couple of months to take up his new appointment as the University Professor of English. This is a welcome news to all well-wishers of the University, to numerous admirers of Mr Stephen who know that there will not be another Mr Stephen.' (Bengalee, Sept 25, 1913)

As a born teacher whose vocation in life was teaching, Professor Stephen accepted the job. We find in a note of September 1911 that he had been elected to the C. U. Syndicate in place of Mr Percival (resigned), and then in 1914 he was appointed a University Professor in English. So his connection with the University was a continuation of his existing link with it.

At his farewell meeting in the Scottish Churches College on September 18, 1913, speakers who paid tribute to him included Sir Gurudas Banerjee, Dr D. P. Sarvadhikary, Professor J. R. Banerjee, Professor A.N. Mukherjee and his student Dr Haridas Bhattacharya.

It must be mentioned that his great reputation was made in his old college as a Professor of Philosophy, though whatever he taught, Mathematics or Physics, indicated that he had the gift of clear exposition in an uncommon degree.

When I came to the M. A. class as his student (1922-24), the renowned Professor, who was already a legend, was fast losing his eye-sight, and his attraction as a teacher was fading. His gait indicated the weight of years and his spoken words were few and almost inaudible. He was a bit careless in his dress. Some of us could not then quite appreciate why he wrote on the black-boards with the help of his magnifying glass. But later we understood that his notes were meant to reach the least sophisticated among his students. Teaching Ruskin's *Unto This Last* he gave of his best in objective analysis, in words clear and lucid, whose simplicity was obvious, but whose profundity was noted only by the discerning few. Only in our maturity we could recognise what Max Muller stated — 'Scholars come and go and are forgotten ; but the road they have opened remains.'

In our days by writing his *A Syllabus of Poetics* he proved his command over a different branch of study.

I am not competent to elaborate on this topic. I would rather try to give some idea of the man as I knew him.

His innate modesty and reserve prevented him from disclosing any details of his family and bio-data. I knew that he lived very simply at the Spence's Hotel where his students had free access. I knew that to the outsider he was known for his eccentric ways as these were more easily seen than the inner strength in his mind and spirit. In fact, in his later days, he moved more and more in the domain of the mind. His absent-mindedness, forgetfulness of the names of his pupils, and aloofness, increased with advancing years. It was hard to believe that in his earlier years, he was not only the President of the Philosophical Society in the Scottish Churches College, but also the founder of the Dramatic Union. Even when we knew him, there was an element of the unexpected in him. Though he nodded as an

aged man, he would smile at times like a child. The ironies of life never weighed him down nor extinguished the courage and nobility of his soul, of which a few instances I give below. Two incidents have been narrated by the renowned revolutionary Dr Jadugopal Mookherjee in his reminiscences, *Biplabir Smritikatha*.

According to Dr Mukherjee, Professor Stephen who is called saint-like, protected his students who were about to be arrested for shouting *Bande Mataram* in the College. And when a Christian teacher slapped a student, he not only reprimanded the teacher but suspended him for 15 days.

Professor Rangin Halder informed me that when a gold watch and chain, evidently the Professor's heirloom, was stolen and his servant was caught red-handed, he blamed not the thief but himself for his ostentatious display which tempted a poor man.

I would like to end on a personal note. In the University he was given Rs. 1000/- per month as pay, but he took only Rs. 750/- and set apart Rs. 250/- for giving stipends to students in need. When I approached him, he at once put me at ease and was most kind. Wanting to be like the others was never his weakness, and though he was not a conformist even in his old college, this trait in him developed with age when he communed more and more with perennial values and became oblivious of the trivialities of life.

He was blessed that he had found his true mission in life and we are blessed that we were students of such a rare type of Professor.



HENRY STEPHEN  
—University Professor of English

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SUBODH CHANDRA SEN GUPTA

WHEN I think of my old days, faces of some eminent teachers swim into my ken... It is heartening to remember men whose memories loom large in an age of dwindling values. I recall, first of all, Henry Stephen, the University Professor of English...

Henry Stephen was a savant and a saint, and at a distance of half a century it would be difficult to convince a sceptical age that such a man ever existed. He came to India as a teacher of one of the two institutions subsequently merged into what is now the Scottish Church College. I have heard that in his early days he was a prodigy in Science and Mathematics, but he soon switched over to Philosophy, and of Philosophy, he became, with all respect to other prominent names, the most popular teacher in this part of the country. His still very readable *Problems of Metaphysics* is by my side as I am writing these lines, and it was at one time a 'must' for every student of the subject. What is not generally known is that when Sir Asutosh Mukherjee wanted a Professor of Philosophy in place of Brajendranath Seal, it was on Henry Stephen's expert advice that he offered the appointment to Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. By then Stephen himself had succeeded Robert Knox as Professor of English. I have heard that his first hurdle was that the salary of Rupees one thousand seemed to be too much for a poor Scotsman serving in a poorer country. So it was decided that he would accept Rs. 750/-, and the remainder would be disbursed as free-studentships. He had almost a genius for lucid exposition which made abstruse problems clear as daylight. This lucidity is very different from the facile prolixity of popular text-books which skirt the crux of philosophical problems by spreading out a screen of vague phrases that might mean anything or nothing. Henry Stephen, however, could be simple and precise in expression because he could throw light on the deeper recesses of his subject. His enduring contribution as Professor of English is embodied

in *A Syllabus of Poetics*, professedly an examination of the critical theories of Coleridge and Wordsworth but really an illuminating exposition of the mystery of poetic creation. I wonder if the present generation of students have heard of *A Syllabus of Poetics*, far less read it, but it is sure to come to its own again when the dust raised by fashionable clichés, such as 'Objective Correlatives', 'the inter-inanimation of words' has blown off.

When I was a student, Henry Stephen's best days were over, for as he ruefully said, his eyes were gone. But he was hefty and vigorous, and disdaining to use the lift, he would climb the stairs to the gallery on the third-floor of Darbhanga Building, where, with the help of magnifying glasses, he would write out his day's lecture on two large blackboards. It was a sight at once magnificent and pathetic. I shall close my account of him by recounting a tender anecdote about his conscientious scruples. He lived in an inexpensive hotel and used the cheapest form of travel—the tram car. His blindness made him the dupe of all who had spurious coins to pass off. So the first thing he would do on boarding the tram would be to hold out a handful of small coins before his nearest fellow-passenger who would select a good coin which he would present to the conductor when the latter would come to sell him his ticket. The caution, he thought, was necessary, because although he was obliged in his near blindness to accept bad coins, it would be improper for him to palm off any of these on the conductor, or on any one else.

## THE MASTER AS I KNEW HIM

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NIRMALA SINHA (née BOSE)

IT WAS the session 1922–1924 of M.A. English of Calcutta University. There were only three girls in the 5th year class of whom I was one. Sir Asutosh himself had welcomed us in the University. (Altogether there were six girl students in the University that year.) So, I may claim to be one of the last surviving students, at least surely the last living *woman* student, of our teacher Dr Henry Stephen. Almost all others—a few apart, may be—have gone to meet their Master in the Great Beyond.

It was in the 6th year class that I first met him. In our days, the Romantic Period was divided into two sections in the Syllabus with 200 marks allotted to it—as the VIth paper, i.e., Romantic Poetry and the VIIth paper, i.e., Romantic Prose. Dr Henry Stephen used to teach us the VIIth paper.

He was very tall, spare-built, always with a smile on his lips and was a very serious teacher. He was a Scot, besides which he had some oral defects which made it somewhat difficult for us to follow his lectures. He was quite aware of it, and for our convenience always wrote out his lectures on the blackboard of the classroom. These lectures were collected and printed by Calcutta University under the title of *A Syllabus of Poetics*.

This *A Syllabus of Poetics* is still a wonderful book, even if a little dated; not very big in size, it shows nevertheless how great an intellectual the author was. Our Syllabus of that paper included Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (not a few chapters as in today's syllabus—but the whole book), Wordsworth's *Preface* and Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*. The first-named book terrified us with its bulk and intricate arguments. Dr Stephen was so great a savant, that he could easily and very gracefully come down to the level of the average intellect—and surely this is the very virtue of a true teacher. His treatment of the three authors was so simple, yet so

wonderful and lucid that we had no difficulty in mastering the contents. A later edition of *A Syllabus of Poetics* included *Aristotle's Poetics* and *Rhyme and Rhythm* – all very useful for learners like us, for we were really-beginners. He made all the abstruse arguments very simple and easy. Everyone had a copy of that book, and I am not in the least ashamed to admit, after all these years, that I got through with very good marks by reading Dr Stephen's *A Syllabus of Poetics*. It is a pity that Calcutta University, having its own press, does not reprint the book, though I had repeatedly approached the authorities with the request.

Much later, when I was a lecturer here, I always advised my students to read Dr Stephen's *A Syllabus of Poetics*, telling them about the simple yet scholarly treatment of the subject by the great master. For I had never liked the idea of students getting the Master's degree without knowing what it is all about the three great prose pieces ; and throughout all the 15 years that I had been a teacher here, I told my students that that was how I was paying my *guru-dakshina* to my great master. Within ten years all the available copies were sold out and one agent of the book-shop requested me to ask the students to sell back their copies after passing the Examination. I did nothing of the sort, for I wanted my students to *possess* their copies, as I do mine – a treasure to keep forever. Calcutta University *should reprint* the book.

When he entered the classroom and stepped on the teacher's platform, we could hear the soft jingling of a bunch of keys, a tooth-pick, a watch, and some other small articles which dangled from his neck by a number of black tapes or ribbons, lying on his chest like necklaces. These produced a jingle whenever he moved. He had a Waterman pen, the type which wound the nib down after writing and required immediate replacement of the cap. Dr Stephen, like a true "absent-minded professor", very often forgot to do this after roll-calls, with the result that his jacket or shirt front was splashed with ink. Often boys came up and called his attention to the point, at which he smiled a very sweet shy and boyish smile and said something apologetic.

In the classroom he was oblivious of everything but his lectures. So, when he called our roll numbers, and we girls responded standing up, he being a bit hard of hearing could not hear us and would

stare straight ahead, shouting the rolls over and over again, while we helplessly remained standing. This was very amusing to the boys, who enjoyed the Professor's chagrin and our discomfiture, till some one came up to his table and pointed to us. His face would at once break into a smile and with an apologetic nod he would make a gesture to us to sit down. But if we ever met him outside the class-room, he would at once halt and wish us good morning or good afternoon with the invariable smiling query, "Are you a student of Philosophy?"

It seemed he was more interested in Philosophy. People used to say that he was the Head of both the departments of English and Philosophy! But of this I am not sure, I am only repeating what I heard those days.

Sometimes, in between writing lecture notes on the black board and supplementing it with some orally delivered lectures, he would get emotionally very much excited when dealing with Wordsworth. While writing this, I can still see his tall, spare, coated figure pacing by the students' benches in the Pischel Hall, reciting the immortal lines of *Tintern Abbey* :

".....A sense sublime,  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

With the recital, his pace quickened and he looked inspired and the grey-blue eyes lit up as he searched face after face of the students for an answering light. Philosophical inspiration? May be.

In those days, the Central Hall on the first floor of the Darbhanga Building was called the Reading Room where students of different subjects sat and studied at different tables. The Lending Library was just beneath this room on the ground floor. The Reading Room was always full of boys. Fresh from the long-standing, old-world traditions of seclusion and *pardah* (though we were pioneers at that period, of advanced studies for women), we felt very uneasy and awkward to sit among so many boys. Whenever we entered the room hundreds of pairs of curious eyes seemed to pierce us through and through and it was impossible for us to enter the room, far less to try to concentrate and study there. Dr Stephen realised

our difficulties. He had his own room adjoining the Reading Room, facing the Hindu Hostel. He said that his room would be open to us, where only a select few could enter. I can still see the picture of the book-lined room with two long green baize-covered tables placed side by side. There was a human skeleton hanging in one corner, and the Master sitting on an armchair on the opposite corner, deeply absorbed in his book. I had sat in the room and studied there many a day. At present this room is occupied by a section of the University Engineer's office.

Dr Henry Stephen, a bachelor, lived somewhere in the campus of The Scottish Churches College and gave all his earnings to the Scottish Mission ; only this much I know about his personal life, and that also from hearsay. But the Master as I knew him was a simple soul, untainted by any sort of pedantry, completely unconscious of his greatness, having all the marks of a genuine teacher and a true scholar—a real *guru*. That is how I remember him after more than half a century.

May his soul rest in peace.

In the next few pages are reprinted two extracts, one on *Memory* and the other on *Imagination*, both taken from Professor Henry Stephen's

ELEMENTS OF PSYCHOLOGY  
A SHORT COURSE

According to the Syllabus of Calcutta University  
*FOR THE STUDENTS OF THE DUFF COLLEGE.*

Printed at ELM PRESS, 29 Beadon Street, Calcutta.

Printer B. K. Shaw.

Interestingly, and in conformity with the shy and self-effacing nature of Professor Stephen, his name does not appear anywhere in the rare volume which was kindly lent to the Editor of this special issue by Professor Subodh Kumar De who, in his turn, got it from a student of Professor Stephen.

In view of the fact that the contributors of articles on Dr Stephen in this issue of the Bulletin, all his ex-students, between the years 1912 and 1926, have written about their Master from *memory* which Professor Stephen calls "*reproductive imagination*", it is hoped that these two extracts on *Memory* and *Imagination* will be found relevant and interesting.

The third piece, *Performance of Othello*, is the only Magazine article written by Professor Henry Stephen that could be traced.

S.K.M.

## ON MEMORY

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HENRY STEPHEN

Memory—also called *representative*, or *reproductive* imagination, to distinguish it from *reconstructive* imagination proper—is the reproduction and re-presentation of past percepts of things in *the same form, order, and connexion in which they were originally experienced*, together with the *recognition* of them as having been experienced by ourselves at some particular point of past time. It includes, therefore, the power (i) of reproducing and *re-presenting* past experiences of our own in the form of mental images, with the same order and connexion as the original percepts ; (ii) of *recognising* these images or ideas as *re-presentations* of actual percepts of our own ; and (iii) of referring the experiences which they represent to their proper position (approximately at least) in past time (*localising* them, so to speak, in time).

Memory is called *reproductive* and *representative imagination*, because it reproduces and re-presents real past experiences in the form of mental images or concrete ideas. It is not *free*, like artistic imagination, but limited to *facts* by the consciousness of having experienced them.

\* \* \* \*

Memory, then, is the power of reproducing in the form of ideas or mental images, things and events formerly experienced by ourselves in reality, and of recognising these images as representations of things and events experienced by ourselves at some point of time in our past lives.

It implies, therefore, (i) the raising of certain ideas into consciousness, and keeping of them there for some time, as materials of thought ; (ii) the recognition of these ideas as reproductions or representations of past experiences (percepts) of our own ; and (as implied in recognition) (iii) a conception of time, and the series of experiences in time constituting our past life ; (iv) references of



the experiences thus reproduced and represented to a more or less definite position in the time-series of our life (a localisation of them, so to speak, in time), for mere revival of images reproducing, more or less, past experiences, but without recognition and time-reference, would not be memory, but only phantasy ; and finally, (v) it includes a consciousness of the self as the permanent subject of these successive experiences in time, for without this, recognition would be impossible, and memory meaningless. It is memory more than anything else that brings out the permanence and identity of the self. In reality, "memory is memory of self, and not of things."

\* \* \* \*

There are evidently, then, two main questions with regard to memory—(I) *how past experiences and acquisitions are preserved or retained unconsciously* in the interval between their first sinking out of consciousness, and their reproduction ; and (II) *how they are reproduced when wanted in the conscious form of ideas or mental images*—what Hamilton calls the question of *conservation and representation*.

Some writers, however, dismiss the question of conservation as unnecessary. When percepts pass out of consciousness, "nothing remains latent in the mind, but the power of reproducing them" (no effects, "traces" or "vestiges"). Knowledge of the past exists "not as a mental state but only as the capability of being put into a mental state" (Mill). But mind has not only a power and capability of reproducing percepts, but also a tendency and impulses to reproduce them. What, then, makes it to have this power and impulse ; why has it ideas of its own past experiences more than of other things ? Surely there must be some kind of connexion between past and present experiences, otherwise they could not be represented as one continuous life. The question of conservation, therefore, comes to be much the same as one considered before, *viz*, what makes the unity and continuity of the self – its personal identity ?

## IMAGINATION PROPER

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HENRY STEPHEN

Memory or reproductive imagination consists in making representations of past experiences, and recognising them as such ; and the perfection of memory consists in reproducing them exactly as they were experienced, with the least possible modification or reconstruction.

Constructive imagination, on the other hand, supposes materials supplied to it by memory of past experiences, but *consists in recombining and reconstructing these materials into images or representations of things and events which have never entered into our experience at all—* though they may or may not have entered into that of others: Thus in reading Roman history, or travels in central Africa, or in the Arctic regions, we are reconstructing, and representing in our minds, things which we have not ourselves experienced, though others have. In reading the geologist's description of the early ages of the earth, we are constructing scenes which have been experienced by no human being, but *might* have been, had human beings then existed. In reading the "Thousand and One Nights", or Scott's romances, we are constructing scenes which no one could have witnessed, because they never took place, and therefore indulging in pure fancy. In expectation, we are constructing scenes which we believe we shall ourselves experience in future.

Thus the scenes which imagination constructs may (1) be referred to a particular time, and believed to represent approximately real things and events, as in historical or scientific reconstruction, and in expectation ; or (2) be altogether independent of time and reality, as in pure fancy and romance. But whether they aim at representing reality, as in the former case, or merely at the pleasure of mental activity as in the latter, the process of construction itself is essentially the same.

... ..

Another way of dividing mental constructions is according to the

way in which the mind obtains the materials for them, and the preliminary notion of the kind of construction wanted. This principle of division gives the division of imagination into *receptive* and *creative*.

*Receptive imagination*—is when the guiding idea of the construction, the materials, and the mode of combining them are suggested to the mind from without ; and all that it has to do is to put together the materials in the way suggested. Such imagination therefore is not original, but is a constructing over again of what others have perceived or constructed for themselves, and therefore of what has already passed through the minds of others.

Thus in hearing or reading a description or narrative of things and events which we have not seen, we are constructing images of these things and events as we proceed, but the forms of the images and the materials for them are *suggested* to us by the words of the writer. And what is called vigour, picturesqueness, or power of style in a writer is his power of suggesting images of his own mind to the mind of the reader by means of words, and helping him to picture with unusual vividness and clearness, scenes and events which he has never seen e.g. Tennyson and Carlyle.

*Creative or original imagination*—is when the idea and its materials are not thus suggested from without, but mind supplies or evolves the guiding idea from within itself, and raises the materials from among the contents of its own memory, and put them together according to its own creative impulse.

It is imagination of this higher kind that is required by the inventor who constructs a new combination of mechanical means to produce a desired effect ; the scientist and philosopher who constructs new hypotheses or theories to explain the hidden causes and reasons of things ; and by the artist, musician, and poet, who produces new combinations of forms and colours, sounds and ideas, such as will gratify the sentiment of the beautiful.

Thus imagination, when rightly regulated is conducive to the highest purposes of intellect. Yet it may be used in a way detrimental to it. People may surrender themselves so much to what they merely imagine, as finally to identify it with reality, and allow it to lead them away from truth ; or to become indifferent to, and neglect the realities and duties of life, and live in empty dreams. And farther, it is apt to mix itself up automatically with *memory*, and even with *perception*

to some extent, so that we may think we perceive and remember what we merely imagine.

... ..  
 Something remains to be said about the *development of imagination* in the life of the individual.

1. As it supposes materials, which must be supplied by experiences, preserved and reproduced by memory, there can be little imagination in the child's life until he has undergone many experiences, and his memory has become well-stocked with images of things.

2. As soon memory has developed sufficiently to supply materials, then imagination becomes very active, and indeed the predominant mental faculty for several years of life, as is manifested in play, in hearing and reading stories, fairy tales, adventures, and the like.

3. But in course of time, the reasoning powers begin to develop, and with them, the sense of reality, desire to know what is real, and dissatisfaction with mere play of fancy. One begins to feel more and more the practical necessities of life, and this draws the attention more and more towards real things, and away from the creations of imagination, except in so far as they may be subservient to knowledge, and practical purposes.

4. Later in life however imagination re-appears, with restricted limits, and in more refined form, as *aesthetic taste*, or appreciation of art and poetry, which takes the place of the more exuberant and playful fancy of the child.

DRAMATIC UNION  
PERFORMANCE OF *OTHELLO*

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HENRY STEPHEN

Under the auspices of the above Union a representation of Shakespeare's *Othello* was given by the students of the College on Thursday, the 3rd October.

Our University authorities are known to favour some cultivation of the arts of social entertainment among the students of its schools and colleges. The feature of physical amusements in the form of athletics, games and military drill is now well understood, and such exercises are extensively practised in all Calcutta schools and colleges. But there is still room for social accomplishments of the aesthetic and intellectual kinds. Music and art may seem to be pursuits too far out of connection with the normal run of college work, but dramatic entertainment has always been in line with college studies. This is especially the case where the plays studied and represented have been in the classical languages forming special studies in the schools. Hence the performance of Greek and Latin plays has always been a special feature in the most advanced European schools and colleges. To Indian students, English is what Greek and Latin were, and to some extent still are, to European schools, and plays of Shakespeare have to be studied here as plays of Euripides and Terence are in Europe, and the advantages of dramatic representations is still greater here for this reason, that the language has to be learnt for colloquial purposes, as well as for the more literary accomplishment. The educational value of such exercises in foreign language is beyond doubt. The acting of the play leads to such an understanding of its language and thought as can hardly be attained in any other way ; and the memory for words and distinctness and expressiveness of enunciation acquired in this way are of the highest value to the performers. Indian students have seen for themselves the value of the exercise, and recently they have made

the performance of Shakespeare plays, once a year at least, a common adjunct of their College work. They have undertaken the task voluntarily for their own culture and the entertainment of their fellows, and their work has been recognised, though not promoted by their colleges. Among the first, if not altogether the first to undertake such work were the students of the Duff College. From 1900 onwards such plays as *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* were taken up. The stage apparatus, scenery, and costumes obtainable from Calcutta shops at that time were of a rather primitive kind. But the understanding of the characters, the elocution and action were often an agreeable surprise to the audience. The practice has been continued in the United College under more favourable circumstances. This year there was some difficulty about the selection of a play. The most familiar plays, and those most suitable for amateur performance had already been presented, some of them twice over. The selection at last fell on *Othello*—Sir Henry Irving's version. This selection certainly put the performers to some disadvantage as compared with those of former years. The subject was unfamiliar. The scenes are not such as to excite interest by variety or novelty, or by appealing to the imagination. The merit of the play lies in subtle developments of thought and feeling, which are difficult to render, and not easy to follow—requiring much mental effort on the part of both actors and audience. The entertainment, notwithstanding, with the careful training given by Mr Mauchline and the stage-management of Mr Monomohan Bose, was surprisingly successful and quite up to the level of former years.

The exceptionally subtle and laborious parts are, of course, those of *Othello*, *Desdemona* and *Iago*, and special thanks are due to the members of the Union who undertook these parts, and performed them so successfully. *Othello* was undertaken by Mr Raghabendra Banerjee of the 4th Year, who delineated very effectively the frankness and simplicity of the unsuspecting soldier, and his horror and remorse on finding at last how he had allowed himself to be befooled into crime. Mr A. Mercus of the 3rd Year undertook the part of *Desdemona*, and represented very gracefully and truthfully the simplicity and sincerity, and the tragical end of that much injured lady. The most complex and difficult part of all, perhaps, is that of *Iago*, which was undertaken by Mr Naresh Ch. Mitter, B.A.

Mr Mitter had already won reputation for himself as an actor by his remarkable presentation of Shylock in a former year ; but he had had an even more difficult task, perhaps, in rendering the mental subtleties of "that honest creature", Othello's most trusted friend. He deserves special thanks for the labour he must have spent in preparing this difficult part.

The complaint has been made sometimes that the secondary and minor characters are less carefully performed than the principal ones. This complaint can hardly be made this year.

...                      ...                      ...                      ...

The Union and the performers owe special thanks to the Principal, Dr Watt, for his permission and kind encouragement, and to their Vice-President, Mr Mauchline, for his valuable assistance in preparations, and to Mr Monomohan Bose for his kind support in the arrangement and management of the stage, and also to the Saraswati Jalataranga Concert Party for their music.

President  
Dramatic Union.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The Editor acknowledges with gratitude the willing co-operation rendered by the former students of Dr Henry Stephen who have paid homage to their teacher through their reminiscences, published in this volume. It is indeed gratifying that in spite of the handicap of age and health—the seniormost among them being near ninety and the juniormost near eighty—all of them responded to our request to write for this special issue of the Bulletin. Through their eyes the Departed Great lives once more for the present generation of teachers and students, to inspire them with all that is noble and elevating in the life of a scholar and a teacher.

We are thankful to the Principal of the Scottish Church College for permission to reprint two valuable obituary articles on Dr Henry Stephen from the College Magazine, one, by the Rev. James Watt, Principal, Scottish Churches College (1910 – 1928), and the other by Dr Adityanath Mookherjee, a former student of Dr Stephen in the College, and later, Principal, Sanskrit College, Calcutta (1924-30), and Registrar, University of Calcutta (1931) and George V Professor of Philosophy (offg), Calcutta University (1933-1935). The third one, from the pen of Professor Stephen himself, A Review of a dramatic performance, is also from the Scottish Churches College Magazine. Our thanks are due also to the Librarian of the Scottish Church College who kindly lent us an old photograph of the Professor which enabled us to prepare a block for the picture of Dr Henry Stephen printed in this issue.

We also thank Prof. S. K. De, formerly Vice-Principal, Scottish Church College, and Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Calcutta University, for giving the Editor of this issue a printed copy of Professor Stephen's class-lectures (not available anywhere) from which two extracts on *Memory* and *Imagination* have been taken.

Other articles in this issue relate to the subject in which Professor Stephen was interested—literary criticism, which also he taught in the Post-Graduate classes in the University, except Prof. K. C. Lahiri's which relates an interesting history of the English Department which Professor Stephen joined at its inception.

SUSHIL KUMAR MUKHERJEE



*ESSAYS*

## THE POST-GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH in the University of Calcutta

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K. LAHIRI

### I

THIS premier University of India was founded in the year of the Sepoy Mutiny. At the centenary celebration in January, 1957, a commemoration volume was brought out with contributions of distinguished scholars. But no attempt was made therein to write a systematic, connected history of the study of English or of any other branch of study in this university. An earlier brochure, much smaller in size and more limited in scope, printed privately under the inspiration of the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Pramatha Nath Banerjea, traced briefly the development of the Post-graduate studies in Arts from 1907 to 1948. An independent and comprehensive study of the growth and expansion of the Post-graduate Department of English is yet to be undertaken.

Founded under Act No. II of 1857, passed by the Legislative Council, and granted the Governor-General's assent on January 24, the university remained, under the Act of Incorporation, for about half a century, exclusively an affiliating and examining body; its activities were confined to the recognition of academic institutions of a certain educational standard, and to conducting different public examinations for testing the acquisitions and merits of candidates presented by them. The idea of teaching and research at the post-graduate stage was yet premature. Even the question of prescribing suitable books for study at the university level did not engage the attention of the university before 1881. Towards the end of that year the Senate directed the Syndicate to ask the Faculty of Arts to appoint permanent Boards of Studies chosen from among their own members for the selection of text-books. Several Boards, including a Board of Studies in English and other European languages, were appointed on January 28, 1882.

The introduction of studies in English at the post-graduate stage,

along with that of other disciplines, did not come earlier than the late first decade of the present century. It was the Regulations framed under the Indian Universities Act of 1904 that provided opportunities for the expansion of the University from an affiliating and examining agency to a centre of higher studies and original research. From the very inception the post-graduate course in English occupied an important place among the humanities, a position it enjoyed for about fifty years till after Independence, when the Indian languages, Economics and Political Science gradually received more attention and attracted a larger number of students.

Between 1910 and 1916 only a small beginning was made in providing for the study of English Literature and Language at the post-graduate level. The Professorship of English Language and Literature, along with those of Philosophy, Higher Mathematics, Comparative Philology, and Ancient Indian History and Culture, was created as a result of the inspiration received from King George V during his Coronation Visit to his Indian Empire in 1911-1912. In the Department of English two British teachers were appointed in the persons of Dr H. Stephen and Mr R. Knox; and associated with them there was a small band of Indian scholars including Mr Roby Dutta, Dr H. C. Maitra, Dr H. C. Mookerjee, and Mr J. G. Banerji.

At the beginning of the organisation of the Post-graduate Department in the University, it was not intended to eliminate M.A. studies in the affiliated colleges where partial provision for them had already existed. Thus lectures were being delivered in certain colleges on parts of some subjects. English classes for Post-graduate students were held also at the Presidency College, Calcutta, and Cotton College, Gauhati. This arrangement was continued even long after the University Post-graduate Department had started functioning, the objective of which was rather to effectively supplement the work done in the colleges by arranging for more thorough work at the University. Measures to concentrate Post-graduate studies in the university were taken when it was felt that these were receiving less and less attention in the affiliated colleges where the pressure on under-graduate classes naturally increased. By 1916 it was realised that the dual arrangement of Post-graduate studies in the Colleges and at the University was not helpful towards their development in a co-ordinated, comprehensive, and efficient way. It was proving increasingly difficult to control Post-graduate studies in the colleges so as to co-ordinate them

with the work done at the University and so make them conform to the desired standard. So the university made a direct arrangement for teaching the more important subjects irrespective of what was being done in the colleges. And the process of concentration was satisfactorily completed with the requisitioning of the services of the qualified people from the colleges as Part-time Lecturers in the University Post-Graduate Department. After the passing of the Calcutta University Act of 1951 some of the constituent and affiliated colleges started or revived post-graduate teaching partially; the Presidency College, Calcutta, has partially revived M.A. classes in English.

On the recommendation of the Sadler Commission (1917) for the establishment of a fully equipped teaching university the post-graduate studies were stabilized under the control of Councils of Post-Graduate teaching, and the Department of English was expanded with a full contingent of teachers. In December, 1928, a Committee of Enquiry with 18 members and the Reverend W. S. Urquhart as Chairman was set up to scrutinize the activities and needs of the different departments of post-graduate studies, and its report was discussed by the Senate in March-April, 1930. While appreciating the work of the Department of English, the Committee recommended some measures for expansion in respect of teaching and research.

## II

Great difficulty was experienced, at the initial stage in organizing the P.G. Department, in securing suitable teachers of English. On October 16, 1912, Vice-Chancellor Asutosh Mookerjee wrote to Professor H. M. Percival, then living in retirement in England, with a request to come down to Calcutta to organize the Post-graduate English Department; but the latter could not return to active life in India because of indifferent health.

When the popularity of English as a subject for post-graduate studies reached its zenith about 1920-1921, the teaching staff numbered 22, consisting of one Professor and 21 lecturers, of whom 13 were whole-time teachers of the university and 8 were part-time lecturers from colleges. After the attainment of political independence of the country, as interest in English waned and the number of students in the subject fell, the size of the staff gradually shrank. In 1948-1949 the number of teachers in the English Department was 16, consisting

of a Professor, 6 whole-time Lecturers, 6 part-time Lecturers and 3 whole-time Tutors. In 1956-1957 the number of teachers in the Department came further down to 11, consisting of a Professor, 1 Reader, 4 whole-time Lecturers, and 5 part-time Lecturers, the posts of the Tutors having been abolished. At the present moment (1978 March) the Department has 23 teachers : 1 Professor, 5 Readers, 7 whole-time Lecturers, and 10 part-time Lecturers. The question of expansion or rather of restoration of the former strength of the staff needs be taken up for several considerations. First, there is an increasing pressure in recent years for admission to the post-graduate English class. Then, the M.A. syllabus in English has recently been enlarged, covering Ancient Classics, Modern European Literature, American Literature, and a rational language course in Contemporary English in all its aspects of Phonetics, Linguistics, and Stylistics for the Literature Group (Group 'A'), and three new optional papers, namely, Gothic in relation to English, Medieval European classics, and Historical Study of the English Language, for the Language Group (Group 'B'). Then there is a steady increase in the number of research students working on English Literature and Language, and on their aspects having relevance to India, or on Indo-English Literature. And we all feel the necessity of implementing a sound plan of effective Tutorials, the urgency of which can hardly be over-emphasized. There is also the necessity of checking the fast-declining standard of English throughout the country.

The Departmental Chair of English was held by these distinguished scholars, European and Indian : Professor Robert Knox, M.A. (Oxon.) (1914-1919) ; Professor Henry Stephen, M.A., Ph.D., D.D. (Aberd.) (1919-1927), formerly Professor of Free Church Institution and of Scottish Churches College ; Professor Joy Gopal Banerjee, M.A. (1927-1936), formerly Principal of Victoria College, Cooch-Bihar ; Professor Harendra Coomar Mookerjee, M.A., Ph.D. (1936-1940), formerly Principal of Rajchandra College, Barisal, and later Secretary, Council of Post-Graduate Teaching in Arts, Inspector of Colleges, and Governor of West Bengal ; Professor Mohini Mohan Bhattacharya, M.A., Ph.D. (1945-1955), formerly an Advocate of Calcutta High Court and Part-time Lecturer, P. G. Dept. Calcutta University, Professor Amy Geraldine Stock, M.A. (Oxon.). Dip. in Ed. (Oxon.) (1956-1961), formerly Professor of Punjab University and later of the Universities of Dacca and Jaipur ;

Professor Amalendu Bose, M. A., D. Phil. (Oxon) (1961-1973), formerly Professor of Aligarh Muslim University; Professor Bhabatosh Chatterjee, M. A., Ph. D., D.Litt. (1976—), formerly Professor of Burdwan University.

Some of the distinguished whole-time teachers of the English Department were Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, M.A., D.Litt., formerly Professor of Vidyasagar College, and later Professor of Comparative Philology and Linguistics, then Chairman of West Bengal Legislative Council, and finally National Professor; Amiya Chakravarti, M.A., D.Phil. (Oxon), Visiting Professor in some universities, including Howards and Boston, in U.S A. Among the part-time teachers of English in the P. G. Department of the University there were the following : Professor Prafulla Chandra Ghose, Dr Srikumar Banerjee, Professor Tarak Nath Sen, Dr Subodh Chandra Sengupta, from Presidency College; Professor Scrimgeur, Professor Mowat, Professor Sushil Chandra Dutta from Scottish Churches College; Principal Heramba Chandra Maitra, Principal Rajani Kanta Guha, from City College; Rev. C. S. Milford from St. Paul's College; and Rabindra Narayan Ghose from Ripon College.

The centenary volume of Presidency College describes Prof. P. C. Ghose as "the greatest teacher of English in the annals of the Presidency College. While his far-reaching scholarship, amazing mastery of English, and incomparable teaching abilities, including a rare gift for reading, breathed life into any topic or author he was asked to teach, whether it was Poetry or Philology, Chaucer or Milton, the Bible or Lytton Strachey, it was on Shakespeare that he reached the peak of his form and gave to generations of students an experience that can only be described as wonderful." Dr Srikumar Banerjee possessed a unique power of analysis and elucidation of literary subtleties. Principal Rabindra Narayan Ghose was another singular figure among the part-timers who was not only one of the most loved and revered but unquestionably one of the finest teachers of English Bengal has produced in the present century, one gifted with a rare literary sense.

### III

From the very beginning of the M.A. Examination in the University, even before the post-graduate classes were started, English had been a very popular subject with students. As early as

1912 as many as 70 examinees offered themselves for English ; and recently the number rose 20 times, the larger number being private candidates, coming from different spheres of life, from school teachers to business executives.

Since the inception of Post-Graduate teaching in the University in 1917 the popularity of the English class was quite high and unabating. Students rushed to this department in such a large number that it sometimes became a difficult problem to keep them out to avoid congestion. Consequently English classes were always very big and unwieldy. For a period of several years, at the height of popularity, they had to be split up into sections which, at one stage, numbered 3 for each of the preliminary and final, then known as the Fifth and the Sixth, Year classes. In the academic session 1918–1919 arrangements were made for, besides the general lecture classes, a large number of Tutorials, each group consisting of about 15 students. In the Minutes of the Senate, dated the 23rd August 1919, in a review of the condition of Post-Graduate Studies the number of students in the Department of English was recorded as 521, consisting of 300 in the Fifth year class and 221 in the Sixth. During the session 1920–1921 the number of students in the Department was 449, consisting of 241 in the Fifth year class and 208 in the Sixth, compared to only 180 in the Department of Economics and Political Philosophy, which did not as yet bifurcate into two independent departments of Economics and Political Science. After Independence there came a craze for nationalization of the medium of instruction, and as a result, for a session or two (1948–1950) the number of students seeking admission to the M.A. English class began to fall. The reaction was only a temporary phase, and as things settled down, the importance of the study of English reasserted itself. In the session 1956–1957 the number of students in the English Department was 266, consisting of 150 in the Fifth Year class and 116 in the Sixth, out of 3,357 in all the 54 departments of Arts, Commerce, Science and Technology, that is, 8 per cent of the total number of Post-Graduate students. The present (1977–1978) strength of the English class, admission being restricted to Honours Graduates, stands at about 400, equally distributed to two sections each in the First and Second Year M.A. classes. The demand for an expansion of the facilities for studying English is rising so high that in the near future provisions may have to be made here, as have already been made in the two other

Universities in the city, for an evening shift for the benefit of those who work during the day-time.

The total worth of an academic institution is to be assessed not simply by its roll-strength of students and the size of its teaching staff but also by its contribution to original research in the particular branch of knowledge and healthy co-curricular activities which help foster youth welfare in national life.

It is sometimes felt, with regret, that corresponding to the tradition of a quite high standard of teaching an equally glorious record of research work has not been shown consistently by the English Department of Post-Graduate studies in the University. The allegation, not wholly unfounded, applies not simply to this University but to the country as a whole, for, although a large body of men and women have acquired an excellent mastery of English literature and language, and some of them have shown merit, even genius, in original composition in that language, what is called a systematic research either in its linguistic characteristics or in its literary aspects have not been achieved to a desirable extent. The comparative paucity in the production of high standard research work in English is not due to any inertia or incapacity of our alumni, but there are certain initial handicaps inherent in the very circumstances of the case. Original investigations in English literature and language in an Indian University involve difficulties, almost insurmountable, such as non-availability of books, original and critical, and difficulty of access to source materials, like manuscripts and documents, in U. K. and the continent, besides stringency and tardiness in the allocation of grants necessary for ensuring freedom and whole-hearted devotion of the research worker.

Despite the above and many other practical difficulties the English Department has contributed its full share to the reputation established as a centre of learning and research. Quite early the University made arrangements to offer facilities for research immediately after it was empowered to that effect by the Indian Universities Act, 1904, and the regulations made thereunder. Since the organization of the Post-Graduate Department of English research papers and volumes have been regularly produced covering a variety of subjects ranging from studies in Old English to those in contemporary literature. Then there has been regularly a band of research scholars and students, working for doctoral degrees—D. Phil., Ph. D., D. Litt,—



under the guidance of teachers and retired teachers of the Department, and their total output is not negligible in quantity and quality ; some of these theses have been published by the University itself. Many of these papers and theses produced by the teachers and scholars are of quite high standard and would do credit to a department of English studies in any university outside England. These have received wide recognition in academic circles at home and abroad.

A REVIEW OF STEPHEN'S  
*A Syllabus of Poetics\**

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S. K. DAS

I was first introduced to Henry Stephen's *A Syllabus of Poetics* by my teacher, Professor Jitendranath Chakraborty. It was in 1954 when I was called upon to lecture on Wordsworth's *Preface* (1800) to undergraduate students in a Calcutta college. I was particularly struck by the clarity of Stephen's thought and the lucidity of his exposition. Then in 1961 I re-read the treatise while I was engaged in writing a book on Wordsworth's theory of the imagination. Even today I cannot think of any other treatise of the same kind in which the most abstract ideas are presented in such a transparent manner. It is a pity that the book has escaped the notice of the editors of *The English Romantic Poets*, *Cornell Wordsworth Collection*, and *Wordsworthian Criticism*; and in our country many of the present generation have not cared to see what *A Syllabus of poetics* has to offer.

The first five parts of the book are outlines of lectures delivered at the University of Calcutta between 1923 and 1927 and they were based on Wordsworth's *Preface*, (1800 & 1802), relevant chapters of *The Biographia Literaria* and Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*. The last three parts deal with Aristotle's *Poetics*, principles of poetry as applied to criticism, and classical and romantic poetry. These lectures were recommended for Post-graduate study by the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the Vice-Chancellor and President of the Post-graduate Department at that time. Stephen considers the three short tractates—Wordsworth's *Preface*, *The Biographia Literaria* and Shelley's *Defence*—by three of the great poets as “the clearest, the most succinct, most to the point and most suggestive”. Aristotle's *Poetics* was added as “the most condensed and authoritative description of the classical type of poetry.” Parts VI, VII and VIII are

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\**A Syllabus of Poetics*, Calcutta University, 1927.

reprinted from articles published in *The Calcutta Review*. The essay on romanticism was meant as an aid to the study of Wordsworth : but those sections on the music of poetry have led to some repetition of topics. However, the general account of poetry given here is in agreement with that of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley.

To the student of English literature Wordsworth's theory of the imagination is important today primarily for two reasons. First it provides a point of view from which one can measure the varying degrees of success that Wordsworth attained as a poet. It is still the general feeling that Wordsworth's position in English literature and his genius as a poet has not been acknowledged without the reservation that characterizes the status of great poets like Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Keats. Evidence of this feeling exists in the marked ambivalence of attitude to much of Wordsworth's poetry shown by the adherents of the New Criticism. With a few exceptions they grant greatness to the poetry of Wordsworth but find it less suited to their orientation and skill than the more subtle linguistic complexities in the poetry of Donne or Eliot. I do not wish to imply any disparagement for this school of criticism, for their method of explication has revealed unsuspected beauties in Wordsworth's poetry. I appreciate specially Stephen's suggestion that most of Wordsworth's poems cannot be fully understood until they are read according to the principles which the poet himself enunciated.

Secondly, a study of Wordsworth's theory is important because there is still much disagreement about his theory. The Preface of 1800 has been regarded as "first-class pamphleteering" and his "metaphysic of poetry" has been questioned. It has also been said that Wordsworth was not an ideal expositor and that there are contradictions that mar his theory. Stephen's analysis offers us a careful examination of the *Preface* and after making due allowance for the inconsistencies and contradictions in the formulation of his theories he determines the conditions under which they can be accepted.

Stephen states his view of poetry clearly : "Poetry is a revelation and expression of those truths which affect most directly the well-being and destiny of humanity and thereby touch most strongly the human feelings." And then he goes on to distinguish in a general way seven different periods in which different circumstances of

the English people have given rise to different kinds of poetry, by producing different kinds of thought and different ways of expression. While giving a brief account of each of these periods Stephen seems to follow the traditional method of dividing the periods of English literature and his comments on the characteristic qualities of each period are not novel, but they are straightforward and unambiguous. But the student of literature today may not agree with him when he remarks that the lyric poetry of the metaphysicals "declined from sincere thought and feeling into artificial metaphor, conceits and affectation (e. g. in Lyly, Donne and Cowley)". Stephen's observation on the eighteenth century is also an instance of imperfect sympathy. Only when he approaches the poetry of Wordsworth, he seems to be on firm ground. He begins his examination of Wordsworth's theory by refuting some popular misconceptions about the Preface :

Many critics, from Coleridge onwards, have represented him as teaching that the subject and style of his Ballads of humble life, ought to be the subject and style of all poetry—both of his own and that of others. Then, when they find that Wordsworth like other poets varies his style in keeping with his subject, they accuse Wordsworth of departing from his principles, and by his practice, contradicting his own teaching. But Wordsworth never really departed from his teaching which was, that poetry is a revelation of truth ; that it consists in thought (truth) and feeling, and not in artificial poetic diction ; and that thought and feeling are best expressed when expressed in the simplest possible language, which is never very different from the speech of common life ; and that gaudy language and figures of speech are but too often disguises to conceal poverty of thought and unreality of feeling.

Stephen suggests that Wordsworth's *selection* is not basically different from the search for precision which every writer makes, the search for the right word, the authentic idiom, the logically ordered pattern of the sentence, or the illuminating metaphor. Besides, the phrase 'the real language of man' according to Stephen may be said to have been used in a general sense and it applies both to poems written in a commonplace style as well as those written in a heightened style. This seems to be the one common designation for the

language of both these classes of poems. It is from this standpoint that we can justify the poet's employment of the phrase.

Stephen also rejects the popular notion derived from the *Preface* that Wordsworth insisted that all poetry should deal with humble and rustic life.

It should be noticed that though Wordsworth is here merely explaining why some of the poems in the *Lyrical Ballads* deal with 'humble and rustic life', Coleridge and many others have assumed that he is here teaching that all poetry should deal with 'humble (Coleridge even makes him say *low*) and rustic life', which is certainly very far from the truth. All that he says is, that humble and rustic life is a legitimate source of poetic thought and feeling.

Wordsworth speaks of the 'majority' of his poems in the first volume as having been written 'in the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society'. He does not extend the remark to the entire body of poems in that volume. There is another aspect of Wordsworth's theory which is linked with his theory of *selection*: the desirability of choosing the more impassioned experiences and feelings of rustic life. In his actual choice of incidents Wordsworth seems hardly influenced by such a consideration; but this was due to the fact that to him, imbued as he was with a strong sense of the passionate character of rustic life, a mere hint of passion was sufficient to determine the choice of the subject matter.

Coleridge and other critics following him think that Wordsworth assumes the language of 'humble and rustic life' to be the only real language of men and, therefore, teaches that all poetry should be composed in the language of these people...Wordsworth, however, uses the word 'generally' meaning that his principle need not be taken to exclude cases in which the best possible expression may require words or phrases different from common language, as is often the case in the later plays of Shakespeare, in Milton, and sometimes (though rarely) in Wordsworth himself. Nevertheless, he reminds us that the greater part of all poems and nearly all the best passages in poetry, are composed in language not essentially different from that of good prose and common life.

Stephen refutes the charge against Wordsworth's poetry, specially

the notion that his poems were based on trivial thought, by saying that every one of his poems had a 'worthy purpose'.

Stephen's observations on Romantic poetry are adequate ; he says that "Romantic poetry does not merely describe the outside of things, but shows things to be suggestive of a world of reality beyond themselves." But when he approaches the distinction between Fancy and Imagination he seems to be hesitant. It is a pity that he ignores altogether the *Preface* (1815) where Wordsworth provides a defence of the schematic division of his poems. Besides, a rigid application of the theory of separate stages in the growth of the poet's mind is likely to violate the very centre of Wordsworth's belief in the unity of the mind. The nature of this belief has been clearly expressed in *The Convention of Cintra* in which the unity of the mind is linked with the belief in cosmic unity. The same belief is also expressed in the solemn tones of the *Immortality Ode* and in *The Prelude*. Perhaps it would have been better to characterize two distinctly different modes of poetry as having their roots in two quite different traditions—the loco-descriptive poetry of the eighteenth century and the doctrines of German transcendentalism.

*A Syllabus of Poetics* was based on lectures delivered to the post-graduate students of the University of Calcutta : and it contains areas which necessarily overlap. But in spite of its repetition of ideas at times, it is a clear and lucid elucidation of how a poet breaks away from the formal strait-jacket and discovers his own real voice. There is no doubt that this collection of essays, if reprinted by the University of Calcutta, would be of considerable help to students of literature who wish to acquaint themselves with a variety of approaches brought together to stimulate rather than merely guide and instruct.

## THE EYE : A RENAISSANCE MIRROR

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ARUN K. DASGUPTA

THE object of this paper is to explore the possibilities of the mirror as an image for understanding some aspects of the problem of knowledge central to Renaissance thought. These aspects are inter-related. They have, moreover, as I hope to show, some bearing on the artistic problem of the Renaissance. In the first part of this article I shall use an illustration from Bovilius' *Liber de Intellectu* as the frame of reference and, in the second, a few passages from Leonardo da Vinci's *Notebooks*.

### I

Renaissance thinkers and artists had some skill in constructing models which at once mirror their norms of thought and reveal their intelligence. One such model, the central one, was Man. But man himself is endowed with a superb organ, the eye, which establishes his claim to a power of vision uniquely his. Now, the eye is a mirror<sup>1</sup>, and its significance as a mirror is twofold : it is a mirror of vanity or self-indulgence, as also of self-awareness.<sup>2</sup>

The illustration representing the Orders of Nature and of Man in Bovilius' *Liber de Intellectu*<sup>3</sup> may serve as our starting point. The two orders are, we notice, held together by the central figure of the mind-man or the sage, who is *Homo Studiosus* at the apex of the Order of Man and *Homo Rationale* at that of the Order of Nature. To interpret this central figure in the structural scheme of Bovilius' Orders in relation to the figures placed in an ascending order on either side, we have to start at the base. This is divided in eight sections, four on the side of Nature and four on the side of Man. The word 'EST' found all along the base indicates mere being or existence as distinct from the higher levels of life we find as we go up in stages. On the left, there is first *petra* or stone, which belongs to the mineral order, the lowest, of nature, having neither life nor feeling. The corresponding figure of the man on the other side (the

Order of Man) is, accordingly, the stone-man. He sits huddled up, his head (the seat of intelligence) almost buried in his hands : he is inert and dumb. That is how the slothful, melancholy figure of *acedia* appears. The representation is apt, because, like the stone, he shows no sign of life or feeling or thought.

We have the same analogy established between the tree, which has life only (i.e. is capable of nourishment alone), and the glutton or the man of appetite (*gula*) whose sole capacity, apart from mere being, lies in being fed (i.e. in the passive satisfaction of his appetite). Similarly, the horse which, representing the sensible life, has being, life and feeling, corresponds to the sensual man dedicated to the pleasure of the eye, the life of the senses only. Finally, we have the man who represents intelligence, the composite somewhat Janus-like figure of the mind-man or sage.<sup>4</sup> The essence of his wisdom appears to lie in his ability to synthesise in their perfection the two ascending levels of being as they meet in him and so gather his own crucial significance in his central, unifying position.

Bovilius seems to imply that man can place himself at any of the four stages from the stone-man to the mind-man. Of quite some interest is the figure, *Luxuria*, holding a mirror in hand. The irony lies here in the use of the mirror. This is the mirror of delusion and it reflects the folly of the life typified. The intended contrast seems to be with the figure, *Virtus*, immediately above, whose nature is indicated by the descriptive epithet *studiosus*. Instead of a mirror he holds a book in his hand and that is his mirror, the mirror of knowledge. His counterpart in the Order of Nature, with whom he is necessarily identified, *Homo Rationale*, is self-sufficient. His eye is turned inward ; he uses it as the mirror of self-knowledge. He is the type of the wise man.

Let us turn now from this illustration from Bovilius' *Liber* to the portrait of a shameless, vain and sensual woman sitting in front of her mirror. It is the portrait of Diane de Poitiers<sup>5</sup>, mistress of King Henry II of France, later made the Duchess of Valentinois. The way in which the inner, covertly allegorical meaning is mirrored in the portrait is rather striking. The idea of *Luxuria* is merely suggested. The more obviously allegorical figure in Bovilius' illustration contains the hard allegorical core of this picture of Henry II's mistress, so sumptuously invested with allurements accentuated by the only vesture



she wears, her semi-nudity, which is very different from pure nudity. She seems to display it, being a *meretrix*.

The figure with a mirror in Bovilius' illustration is a fool. The wise man, by contrast, is without a mirror because he is his own mirror. He is also a mirror of the universe, a *universi speculum*, a *speculum vivens*. The fool in Shakespeare turned the tables on the wise man by turning him into a mirror of knowledge for his own use. The fool has only to gaze at him to find his own likeness. Thus a fool may grow wise at the expense of the wise man who is really a fool, but only too conceited to know it. The wise man, in his turn, had only to face the fool to learn his lesson of humility, the essence of wisdom or self-knowledge. That is how Shakespeare presents the central paradox of wisdom. The protean nature of man is thus reflected in the protean nature of human wisdom. Thus does Shakespeare hold the mirror of his art up to nature, for is he (the fool) not "Nature's natural" ?

We may also recall how in *King Lear* (III. iv. 26-33), wisdom dawns on Lear as he looks at the Fool. He looks at him at that moment in a way he had never done before, no longer as a mirror of self-conceit, but as a mirror of self-awareness. The thought which begins to form with the words (which are not addressed to the Fool), 'You houseless poverty', breaks off (1.26), and is resumed at 1.28. We are shown here in a concrete and dramatic manner the very process of wisdom, its gestation, the pangs attendant upon the birth of Minerva, so to speak, as she is about to rend the skull, that battered storm-swept head of Lear's, 'so old and white'. As that line (1.26) breaks off, we glimpse the first, faint glimmering notion. He pauses, because something has struck him. But the state of mind he is in, tottering perilously on the brink of insanity, does not allow him to retain his hold on the thought he has glimpsed merely. But presently it comes (ll. 28-33), and the sudden onrush of the tide of truth washes off the taint of his own unpardonable folly : he is half-redeemed. Thus, even as he bends in courtesy—a touching gesture—saying, "In boy, go first" (1.26), he is about to rise, a new man almost. Very soon he will be indeed another man in a very different sense, but on that stormy night Shakespeare sows the seed of Lear's redemption. In spite of the imminent outbreak of his insanity we have here revealed the true significance of the theme of renewal of life, of *renaissance* or re-birth.<sup>6</sup> It coincides with the birth of truth in a soul darkened,

almost demented, torn by grief and anger, tormented by an impotent passion for revenge. All this, we realize, is concentrated in the central paradox of the fool, a mere boy clinging to an old man in an eternal embrace of understanding.

Finally, before concluding our observations in this section, let us consider briefly the artistic possibilities of the structure—the ideal pyramidal one—somewhat akin to the one suggested by the arrangement of the figures in the illustration from Bovilius' *Liber de Intellectu* already discussed. The triangle offers, as in some portraits of artists as different as Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael<sup>7</sup>, a unique scope for enclosing reality as well as elevating it to an ideal plane. In Leonardo's scheme the vision is directed to the background of a cosmos of mysterious depth, the apex of the visible triangle being, as it were, the centre of an invisible globe whose mysterious topography is revealed though the highly suggestive *chiaroscuro* which characterizes Leonardo's mature style. In Raphael the same is the calm centre of the ideal and radiant circular frame of the picture itself, his favourite *tondo*.

We may consider also in this connection the characteristic difference in the function of the eye as the focal point in the portrait as conceived by these two artists. With Leonardo, the classic instance is the portrait of Mona Lisa. As we stand and gaze at her, she seems to change like a living person : a striking proof of the imaginative truth of the transforming power of man as artist or maker. Here the eye assumes the rôle of a mediator between the intelligible and the sensible segments of the cosmos of the picture itself.

In the eyes of Raphael's Madonnas, in the eyes even of his Galatea, we seem to grasp the ideal centre of the picture, the centre from which the serene ideality of Raphael's *amor* radiates. This serenity is independent of a sacred or a profane content. It is expressive of an essential repose in the midst of the subtly ordered movements of figures that seem to revolve around Galatea, some caught even in gestures of passionate abandonment. We understand why, when asked, "Where in all the world did you find a model of such beauty ?", Raphael replied that he followed 'a certain idea' he had formed in his mind.<sup>8</sup>

## II

Let us now consider the significance of the mirror of art, having quoted earlier the phrase used by Hamlet when speaking to the players about 'the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to *hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature*' (*Ham.* III. 2.25). It would be useful to consider at first certain remarks made by Leonardo da Vinci in praise of the painter who, he claims, is the *paragone*, "lord of all types of people and of all things."<sup>9</sup>

The argument relates to the immediacy of reflection that painting alone as medium can offer the universe as subject matter.

"Whatever exists in the universe", says Leonardo, "in essence, in appearance, in the imagination, the painter has *first in his mind and then in his hand* and these are of such excellence that they can present a proportioned and harmonious view of the whole that can be seen simultaneously, at one glance, *just as things in nature*." (Italics mine).<sup>10</sup> In a mirror things can be so *seen* "simultaneously, at one glance, just as things in nature."

For Leonardo things had to be made *visible*. He described painting as "the sole imitator of all the visible works of nature." The adversary, both in life and art, of Michelangelo, who strove to emancipate the soul, the form, of a statue from the stubborn stone ('per forza di levare'), Leonardo held ideas opposed to Neo-Platonism. For him, as Panofsky says,<sup>11</sup> the soul is not held in bondage by the body, but, rather, the body is held in bondage by the soul. In painting he found the key with which to keep and confine the beauty of the physical universe. We may recall how Gerard Manly Hopkins uses the word "key" in the opening lines of *The Leaden Echo* :

"How to keep—is there any any, is there none such, nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or *key* to keep / Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty,...from vanishing away?"<sup>12</sup> It is in this unique power, according to Leonardo, to preserve entire, as in a mirror, the body, as distinct from the soul, of things that painting "excels and ranks higher than music, because it does not fade away, as soon as it is born, as is the fate of unhappy music. On the contrary, it endures and has all the appearance of being alive, though in fact it is confined to one surface."<sup>13</sup> "Confined to one

surface": how aptly this brings out the analogy with a mirror ! The image reflected in a mirror is only surface-deep, but how deep that surface can be ! It reflects clearly and all at once whatever it receives in its bosom.

The analogy, as also the claim that painting is superior to all other arts, is based on the depth, clarity, vividness and immediacy of its appeal to the eye which was regarded as "the nobler sense". To quote from Leonardo :

"If the poet serves the understanding by the ear, the painter does so by the eye—the nobler sense ;...Undoubtedly the painting being by far the more *intelligible* and *beautiful* will please more".<sup>14</sup>

"The eye which is called the window of the soul is the chief means whereby the understanding can most fully and abundantly appreciate the infinite works of nature."<sup>15</sup>

The medium of painting is essentially a mirror of knowledge, the knowledge of the universe in fact, because it makes possible the ideal coincidence of beauty and intelligibility. "Art is not the mere reproduction of a ready-made, given reality."<sup>16</sup> It is not an imitation, but a discovery of reality, i.e., of its organic unity. As Cassirer says, while science demonstrates this unity by abbreviating reality (i.e., by abstraction), art does so by intensifying it (i.e., by concretion). It does not enquire into the causes of things ; it gives us the form of things or rather, the intuition thereof. The artist thus is as much a discoverer as the scientist. One discovers forms, the other facts or laws. "The great artists of all times", says Cassirer, "have been cognizant of this special task and special gift of art. Leonardo da Vinci spoke of the purpose of painting and sculpture in the words 'saper vedere'.<sup>17</sup> The infinite variations, the untold possibilities of visual experience "become actualities in the work of the artist".<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere Cassirer observes, "This cultivation, this culture of the sensible world constitutes a basic moment and a basic task of the spirit".<sup>19</sup> Later, in the same work, he says that the task of the artist is to join things opposed : "he seeks the 'invisible' in the 'visible', the 'intelligible' in the 'sensible'.<sup>20</sup>

The vision of the unity of the intelligible and the sensible, of the redemption or fulfilment, so to speak, of the one in the other, was integral to Renaissance thought. The thought and works of Leonardo da Vinci, who was a living example of the Renaissance ideal of encyclopaedic knowledge, as also of the dictum that "the artist is as

much a discoverer as the scientist," demonstrate that constant striving after the unification of the intelligible and the sensible that Cassirer defines as the supreme task of the artist. The concept of art as a mirror, as interpreted by Leonardo, may also be helpful as Cassirer has shown,<sup>21</sup> in understanding the tragic vision of Shakespeare who uses that metaphor of the mirror in *Hamlet*, III.2.25, as already mentioned. The impersonality, strict neutrality and perfect transparency of the clear mirror can be seen in Shakespeare's treatment of life, the material of his art, in his tragedies. Material passions, i.e., the passions in real life, rise like dark, ungovernable and impenetrable forces from the level below the conscious: they are necessarily unintelligible. The power they exercise in life is commensurate with their unintelligibility. In actual life they are, in other words, *felt* only, never *seen*. In art, as in Shakespeare's tragedies, they are *seen*, rather than *felt*. They are not experienced with that disastrous incoherence which we know to our cost in real life. In the *Hamlet* passage (III. 2.23-26) Shakespeare uses the term "image":

"...the purpose of playing whose end, both at the first and now, was and is", Hamlet explains, "...to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own *image*.....". But the *image* of passion, as Cassirer points out, is not the passion itself. "The poet who represents a passion does not infect us with this passion".<sup>22</sup> Shakespeare is supremely the poet who does not infect us with the passion he depicts. The power of his portrayal must not be confused with the power these passions may seem to have over the characters as we watch them. At the receiving end an immunity is conferred by the dramatic experience: more, perhaps, than by any other form of aesthetic experience. At the other end, i.e., the creative, a more profound force, the moral, is at work, as the mirror of Shakespeare's art reveals the *character* of these passions. Dark and turbid passions are given a transparency they lack in real life. The superb power which *creates* this transparency, which gives to the darkest and most mysterious forces at work in the human world a hard, bright, bejewelled surface, warm and vivid with colour and form and life, implies *not* sympathy, but *judgment*. The impersonal vision of the great artist penetrates to the nature and essence of emotions which bring about disasters almost of a cosmic magnitude. In this relentlessly penetrating and, necessarily, unforgiving, because totally

comprehending, vision Shakespeare is at one with Leonardo. What can be inferred from that stray and, to all appearances, thoroughly impersonal utterance about art holding the mirror up to nature, and, more justifiably, from his practice as a dramatist, his mode of creating character, is, as Cassirer observes, "in complete agreement with the conception of the fine arts of the great painters and sculptors of the Renaissance. He would have subscribed to the words of Leonardo da Vinci that 'saper vedere' is the highest gift of the artist."<sup>28</sup> His total identification with his characters, good and bad alike, his "negative capability", as Keats called it, is evidence of the supreme privilege of the maker, the constant exercise of a dispassionate understanding, the kind of detachment with which God alone may be presumed to regard his own creations. There is infinite understanding without compassion. Or, perhaps, only in infinity can compassion and understanding coincide. Such is the relentless urge of creation that impels a great artist to become wholly absorbed in form-making, and in nothing else.

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NOTES & REFERENCES

1. See *Selections from the Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* ed. Irma A. Richter (World's Classics), pp. 111-112 (Section IV : "The Arts", Subsection I. I (b) : "The Eye", prgs. 6 & 7).

2. See Erwin Panofsky : *Problems in Titian, mostly iconographic*, p. 93.

3. The illustration is reproduced in André Chastel's *The Age of Humanism* (London, 1963), p. 27.

4. See in this connection E. F. Rice : *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom* (Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 106-23.

5. School of Fontainebleau. Pl. 304 in *Encyclopaedia of World Art* (Mc Graw-Hill, London, 1964), Vol. IX.

Panofsky's interpretation of the mirror in Titian's picture, *A Young Girl Doing Her Hair* is referred to in "Time, Helen & Cleopatra : A Note on Antony & Cleopatra, V. ii. 294-5 & 308-9" (*Presidency College Magazine*, 1974).

6. This deeper meaning of the term, akin to that of the other, "Reformation", suggesting a common urge, amounts to a message or, at least, an expectation of salvation. The notion of renewal of life, outer and inner, of nature and of spirit, is reflected in the affinity of terms like *renascor*, *renovare*, *reformare* etc. They all seem to point to a seminal idea of the Renaissance : the possibility, almost infinite, of a renewal of form or transformation.

7. As in Raphael's *Madonna del Cardellino* (Uffizi), "with the children equally disposed on either side of the seated Virgin and the whole composition based on an equilateral triangle". (Wolfflin, *Classic Art*, p. 84).

8. See E. H. Gombrich : *The Story of Art* (Phaidon Press, 1954), p. 234. See also Gombrich's lecture entitled "Psycho-Analysis & the History of Art" included in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (Phaidon Press, 1963), p. 35.

9. *Selections from Notebooks*, ed. cit., Section IV, Subsection II ("Comparison of the Arts : Painting, Music and Poetry"), p. 194.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 195. See also p. 218.

11. E. Panofsky : *Studies in Iconology*, Ch. VI. p. 182.

12. On these lines Hopkins remarks : "...the thought is of beauty as of something that can be physically kept and lost and by physical things only, like keys...". *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins* selected by W. H. Gardner (Penguin Poets), p. 52 and p. 231 (Editor's Notes).

13. *Selections from Notebooks*, ed. cit. p. 197. It is interesting to compare the argument of St. 2, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, regarding the beauty of the images depicted on the urn.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

16. Ernst Cassirer : *An Essay on Man* (Yale University Press, 1944), Ch. IX, p. 143.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

19. Ernst Cassirer : *The Individual & the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, tr. Mario Domandi (Oxford, 1963), Ch. IV., p. 133.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

21. E. Cassirer : *An Essay on Man*. p. 147.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

## RELATIVE SPIRIT

*Walter Pater and Nineteenth Century British Philosophy*

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JASODHARA BAGCHI

### I

A survey of the mid-nineteenth century philosophical scene in Britain elucidates the intellectual bearing of Pater's critical standpoint. The close correspondence between Pater's criticism and the philosophy current in his time has been noticed by at least two major studies of his works.<sup>1</sup> But what has not been emphasized is the conformity of Pater's criticism to the liberal ideology of the 'relative' that dominated the mid-Victorian society. The late fifties and the sixties of the nineteenth century, when Pater was getting equipped as a critic, saw a natural coming together of the Millian empiricism, Positivism and Darwinism on the one hand and the Hegelian revival in England on the other. This resulted in a consolidation of the 'liberal' culture of the English ruling classes in the fifties, sixties and the seventies of the nineteenth century. What brought about the consolidation was a distinct shift from the transcendentalism that characterised the socially disturbed decades of the Romantics and the early Victorians to an exclusive subjection to the world of observed phenomena that characterised the relative stability of the mid-Victorian culture. A bird's-eye view of the philosophical scene in the mid-Victorian England brings out the ideological thrust of this buoyant empiricism, which was strong enough to slur over the differences between varied and often contradictory schools of philosophy current at the time.

Pater's 'liberal' aestheticism that is epitomised by his formulation of the 'relative spirit' belongs to this synthesized ideology of the 'relative'. Pater's overriding concern for the 'relative' spirit is best understood as a conscious intellectual response to this particular trend in contemporary philosophy.



## II

As Pater's biographers point out with varying degrees of emphasis, Pater's coming to Oxford in 1859 coincided with a crisis in his faith. He lost the comfortable refuge of the deep religious fervour which appears to have marked his school-days and became open to the new ideas that were circulating. The moment was a propitious one. The Oxford that Pater went up to was still vibrant with the intellectual energy released by the bitter conflict between the Tractarians and the liberals. By 1850 the liberals had clearly won a victory and the intellectual climate favoured philosophical speculation rather than the theological fervour which had caused havoc in the life of the University in the recent past. Pater's friend Mark Pattison, whose contribution lent considerable prestige to the liberal *Essays and Reviews* (1860), however, writing on 'Philosophy at Oxford' for the opening volume of *Mind* in 1876, acknowledges a debt to Newman for indirectly fostering the spirit of philosophy in the University. Talking of the 'limitations of Newman's religious thought' he says.

But it *is* thought, for it inquires. It inquires, indeed, not into truth, but some propositions being assumed true, it desires a quasi-philosophical representation of them in the intellect. Anyhow intelligence is at work upon the mental content. This was the service Dr. Newman rendered to philosophy in Oxford.<sup>2</sup>

The Oxford that Pater came into was waking up to a new spurt of philosophical activity which was largely due to a revival of Hegelianism and which culminated in the three significant contributions listed by Mark Pattison in the essay mentioned above—these were, Jowett's critical introductions, analysis and translation of Plato's *Dialogues*, Green's long critical introduction to his edition of Hume and Wallace's *Prolegomena* to the *Logic* of Hegel.

Apart from the special significance of that particular moment, it was only to be expected that philosophy should have a special interest for Pater. The school of *Literae Humaniores* to which Pater belonged both as an undergraduate and as a teacher, was specially responsive to the current developments in philosophy. 'With all its drawbacks', writes an anonymous writer for *Macmillans Magazine* in 1869, 'the school of *Literae Humaniores* is justly regarded as the true strength of Oxford'.<sup>3</sup> The writer then refers more specifically to the liberal phase of Oxford.

Then when the isolation of Oxford was broken down, and under the life-giving breath of Continental thought the thing of dust began to move after the fashion of a man, it was in the *Literae Humaniores* that each fresh influence made itself felt; in the bright and teeming life of Greece it seemed as if every aspiration of the new world was reflected. How could men have looked so long upon antiquity as a dead aggregate of books? How could they have found no meaning in the things that its prophets, its philosophers, poets and historians had spoken? <sup>4</sup>

A fairly recent survey of Victorian Oxford which appears to have examined the relevant source materials with considerable care, makes similar claims for the impact of liberalising tendencies around 1850 on the discipline of Classics.

Deriving in part from the great tide of preferment and reinforcing the liberal tendency among the younger men, were important changes in the Greats School, which still held unchallenged primacy among Oxford studies. For twenty years or more the philosophical element in the Greats School had been steadily increasing in importance..... In the generation before 1850 the University Curriculum had gradually taken cognizance of the new branches of learning which had grown up outside, the Oxford philosophy had caught up with intellectual currents from which it had been formerly isolated. Sir William Hamilton had enjoyed a vogue in the Schools and then Oxford studies in Aristotle had been put on a scientific basis by contact with German philology. All these changes were given vivid prominence by the Examination Statutes of 1850. <sup>5</sup>

As far as it is possible to trace, given the absence of any really illuminating biographical material for this period of his life, Pater appears to have gathered the tools for his future criticism largely from the readings in philosophy and history which the discipline of *Literae Humaniores* threw open to him. From the beginning Pater appears to have been no merely conventional good student of Classics, looking back wistfully to the glories of the past. He was, rather, interested in participating in the current philosophical issues that he could show to be of living interest to his own time. In a letter to Hermann Diels, answering his query about Pater, Ingram Bywater, who knew Pater intimately as an under-graduate at Queen's College, pays a glowing tribute to the quality of aliveness in Pater.

We attended the same lectures and were in every way inseparable. His mind was much more mature than mine and he completely subjugated me by his verve and originality of view.<sup>5</sup> Bywater further testifies to Pater's conscious effort to keep himself abreast of the contemporary intellectual developments.

As an undergraduate... he devoured all the serious literature of the period. Carlyle, Ruskin, Browning, J. S. Mill and also our older writers, Berkeley and Hume. He managed also to learn in a vacation enough German to read Hegel in the original.<sup>7</sup>

As a young tutor at Brasenose, too, Pater acquired quite a reputation for being in touch with modern trends in philosophical thinking. A belated product of the Oxford Movement, young Gerard Manley Hopkins reacted sharply against this aspect of Pater, who coached him in 1866. An entry in his Journal says, 'Pater spoke for two hours against Xtianity'.<sup>8</sup>

A more enthusiastic response was that of T. Humphry Ward quoted by A. C. Benson.

Then, I suppose about May 1867 came his first lectures. Only six or eight Brasenose men were then reading for classical Greats... We were six men, some novices, some dull, all quite unprepared for Pater. He sat down and began—it was the "History of Philosophy". We expected the old formula about Thales, and some references to Aristotle that we could take down in our books and use for the Schools. It was nothing of the kind. It was a quickly delivered discourse, rather Comtian, on the Dogmatic and Historical Methods; quite new to me, and worse than new to some others. I remember, as we went out, a senior man F—, who used to amaze us by his ready translations of Thucydides in 'Mods' lectures, and who passed as extremely clever as he was in that line—F. threw down his note-book with the cry, "No more of that for me: if Greats mean *that* I'll cut 'em!" (as he wisely did).<sup>9</sup>

Pater's intellectual milieu extended, in a significant way, beyond the walls of Oxford. While Oxford was belatedly sending out feelers towards a full-scale English adaptation of Hegel's philosophy, the influence of which was already beginning to dwindle in its birthplace, English philosophy was being vigorously kept alive in the pages of periodicals. It is not without significance that it is in *The*

*Westminster Review* and in *The Fortnightly Review* that Pater's early writings came out. Pater's approach to literature as a critic was intimately bound up with his special reading of philosophy. Unlike almost any of the major literary writers of his time, with the exception of George Eliot, Pater was actually drawing upon some of the technicalities of contemporary developments in philosophy. The extent and quality of Pater's intellectual engagement in the world of philosophy may be gauged from the first essay that he published. It was a long review article called 'Coleridge's Writings' published in *The Westminster Review*. Though Pater's biographer Thomas Wright, somewhat characteristically, dismisses the essay in a silly parenthesis, Ingram Bywater recognises in it a fitting culmination of Pater's earlier intellectual preparation, and he claims it 'took the cultivated world by storm'.<sup>10</sup> There is the faintly belligerent zeal of a neophyte in the tone of the essay, which is not usual in Pater's writings and the obviously polemical tone and content did not meet with the approval of Pater in his maturer years.<sup>11</sup> But the essay stands as a proof of how carefully Pater had read and interpreted contemporary philosophy and of the way Pater's notion of literary criticism may be said to stem from his participation in the contemporary philosophical scene.

### III

The proper spirit of criticism, as Pater never tires of telling his readers, is the 'relative spirit'. In the very first essay Pater identifies the 'relative' with the 'modern' spirit and gives a memorable description of the working of the 'relative spirit'. It is a *tour de force* and should be kept before our eyes in this discussion of the nature of Pater's philosophical awareness :

Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the 'relative' spirit in place of the 'absolute'... . To the modern spirit nothing is or can be rightly known except relatively under conditions...the idea of the 'relative' has been fecundated in modern times by the influence of the sciences of observation. These sciences reveal types of life evanescent into each other by inexpressible refinements of change ... A faculty for truth is a power of distinguishing and fixing delicate and fugitive details. The moral world is ever in contact with the physical ; the 'relative' spirit has invaded moral philosophy from the ground of the induc-

tive sciences ... Hard and abstract moralities are yielding to a more exact estimate of the subtlety and complexity of our life. Always as an organism increases in perfection the conditions of its life become more complex. Man is the most complex of the products of nature. Character merges into temperament, the nervous system refines itself into intellect. His physical organism is played upon not only by the physical conditions about it, but by remote laws of inheritance, the vibrations of long past acts reaching him in the new order of things in which he lives. When we have estimated these conditions, he is not yet simple and isolated ; for the mind of the race, the character of the age sway him this way or that through the medium of language and ideas... The truth of these relations experience gives us ; not the truth of eternal outlines effected once for all, but a world of fine gradations and subtly linked conditions, shifting intricately as we ourselves change ; and bids us by constant clearing of the organs of observation and perfecting of the analysis to make what we can of these. To the intellect, to the critical spirit, these subtleties of effect are more precious than anything else.<sup>1 2</sup>

As this view of the critical spirit, formulated by Pater so early in his life, is a position to which, broadly speaking, he adheres throughout his life, it is important that we should try and place it in its proper intellectual perspective. In this passage we find Pater's imagination being shaped by the demands of naturalism and a resistance to transcendentalism that characterises the climate of post-Coleridgian English philosophy. Pater's choice of Coleridge as the first significant predecessor with whom he enters into relationship of antagonism is a symptom of the liberalism that he acquired as an undergraduate at Oxford. Perhaps one can trace subtle shifts in Pater's attitude to his society and its institutions, but in his philosophical formulation Pater holds fast to his appeal to the phenomenal world which constitutes the basic staple of his liberal standpoint. For this reason he conceives of the 'relative' in opposition to the 'absolute', a much-hated word in nineteenth century vocabulary, which Pater uses to denote any approach inimical to the concreteness of the physical world and to the world of sensation. Whatever one may say about the growing conservatism of Pater as a senior member of Brasenose College, his intellectual opposition to the 'absolute' he maintained throughout. He maintains the same degree of hostility

towards it in his late work *Plato and Platonism* as he did in his first published writing :

Hereafter, in every age, some will be found to start afresh quixotically, through what a waste of words : in search of that true substance the one, the Absolute, which to the majority of acute people is after all but zero, and a mere algebraic symbol for nothingness.<sup>13</sup>

In philosophical terms this hostility is an antipathy towards metaphysical abstraction. In his 'Coleridge' essay Pater is much more blatant about it :

To suppose that what is called 'ontology' is what the speculative instinct seeks is the misconception of a backward school of logicians ... A transcendentalism that makes what is abstract more excellent than what is concrete has nothing akin to the leading philosophies of the world.<sup>14</sup>

In *Plato and Platonism* he is not so obviously partisan, but his objection to metaphysics still remains and is barely concealed :

By one and all it is assumed, in the words of Plato, that to be colourless, formless, impalpable is the note of the superior grade of knowledge and existence, evanescent steadily, as one ascends towards that perfect (perhaps not quite attainable) condition of either which in truth can only be attained by the suppression of all the rule and outline of one's own actual experience and thought.<sup>15</sup>

The area chosen by Pater is the palpable world of form and colour, the defined world of concrete human experience and sensation in which the appropriate mode of assessment is the relative. This preference for the concreteness of the 'relative' over the abstractions of the 'absolute' approach of metaphysics Pater had derived from a careful response to the current mood in philosophical thinking. We get a clear notion of this from David Masson's mid-nineteenth century survey *Recent British Philosophy*, where Masson talks about the contemporary philosophical attitudes towards Metaphysics :

But Metaphysics is a terrible bugbear of a word in these days. You know the popular definition : When A talks to B, and B does not know what A is saying, and A himself does not very well know either, but both B and A keep up the pretence and nod to

each other wisely through the fog—that is Metaphysics. We are all dearly in love with Physics : but we cannot abide the Meta prefixed to them.<sup>16</sup>

Writing as a neophyte, it is against the presence of Metaphysics in Coleridge that young Pater takes his stand : for him Metaphysics was merely a submission to a rigid and immutable Absolute, an idea which Pater considers as running against the major philosophical trends acceptable to his own generation. This is his main charge against Coleridge :

The literary life of Coleridge was a disinterested struggle against the application of the relative spirit to moral and religious questions. Everywhere he is restlessly scheming to apprehend the absolute ; to affirm it effectively ; to get it acknowledged....<sup>17</sup>

Leaving the question of judging the rightness or wrongness of this to a different occasion, we should try and understand the full force of what Pater means by the 'relative' spirit. I suggest that the dominant tendency of the philosophy of Pater's time is best characterised by this very term, which Pater adopts almost as a motto of his criticism. With this one key distinction between the 'relative' and the 'absolute' he goes, as I hope to show, to the heart of one of the most significant trends in the philosophy of this age.

David Masson's useful survey, covering the field up to the middle of the 1860's, shows a six-fold division in the philosophy current at the time. The entire range extends, according to Masson, from the total nihilism of Hume to the dogmatic Absolutism of Spinoza.<sup>18</sup> Of the six divisions the two in the middle were clearly the most influential : Sir William Hamilton and John Stuart Mill were the two philosophers who made the most serious attempt at a workable compromise between the dissolution of unqualified empiricism and an *a priori* faith in the Absolute. It was Sir William Hamilton's article on the Philosophy of the Unconditioned in *The Edinburgh Review* in October 1829 that launched this full-scale vindication of the relative spirit. Sir William Hamilton declared the impossibility of philosophising about the unconditioned ; philosophical speculation could only be conducted relatively and under conditions.

In this article Sir William Hamilton used the occasion of reviewing Victor Cousin's *Cours de Philosophie* to propound his own system

which came to dominate a large part of nineteenth century philosophical thinking. He said in a crucial passage :

In our opinion, the mind can conceive, and consequently can know, only the limited, and the conditionally limited. The unconditionally unlimited, or the Infinite, the unconditionally limited, or the Absolute, cannot positively be construed to the mind ; they can be conceived, only by thinking away from, or abstractions of, those very conditions under which thought itself is realised.... The unconditioned negation, and the unconditional affirmation of limitation ; in other words, the infinite and the absolute, properly so called, are thus equally inconceivable to us.

Or again :

Philosophy, if viewed as more than a science of the conditioned, is impossible. Departing from the particular, we admit, that we can never, in our highest generalisations, rise above the finite, that our knowledge, whether of mind or matter, can be nothing more than a knowledge of the relative manifestations of an existence.<sup>19</sup>

Sir William Hamilton traces in Cousin the ghost of the 'Absolute' which has continued to haunt the German metaphysicians in spite of Kant, who, he says, 'had slain the body, but 'had not exorcised the spectre of the Absolute...'. Not content with the image (or perhaps the lack of it) of a 'spectre' Hamilton bursts out in a mythic image : 'but the absolute, like the water in the sieve of Danaides, has hitherto run through as a negative into the abyss of nothing'.<sup>20</sup> It is the negation of manifest reality leading to the void of nothingness that the philosophical mood of nineteenth century England abhorred, and wooing of the 'Absolute' by Metaphysics was especially repellant because it betrayed the concrete fullness of actual existence to the unknown negation of the Infinite. In the words of Hamilton again,

To reach the point of indifference by abstraction we annihilate the object and by abstraction we annihilate the subject, of consciousness. But what remains ? —Nothing ... We then hypostatise the zero ; we baptise it with the name of Absolute, and conceit ourselves that we contemplate Absolute existence when we only speculate absolute privation.<sup>21</sup>

John Stuart Mill in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* praises Hamilton for contributing to this important aspect of nineteenth century British philosophy ;



The doctrine which is thought to belong in the most especial manner, and which was the ground of his opposition to the transcendentalism of the later French and German metaphysicians is that which he and others have called the Relativity of Human Knowledge. It is the subject of the most generally known and most impressive of all his writings, the one which first revealed to the English metaphysical reader that a new power had arisen in philosophy; and, together with its developments, it composes the 'Philosophy of the Conditioned'; which he opposed to the German and French philosophies of the Absolute, and which is regarded by most of his admirers as the greatest of his titles to a permanent place in the history of metaphysical thought.<sup>22</sup>

By emphasising the significance of the 'relative' Hamilton was paving the way for what Mill himself called the 'experiential' approach to the world. It is the 'relative' spirit, once again, that Mill welcomes in the Positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte. Mill's balanced appraisal, 'The Positive Philosophy of Comte', in *The Westminster Review* mentions one of the most significant aspects of the reception of Positivist philosophy in England—the fact that it found a natural soil in England because it adhered to the most dominant tendency of the day, the 'relative' spirit. Mill summarises the basic position of Comte's philosophy as follows:

The fundamental doctrine of a true philosophy, according to M. Comte, and the character by which he defines Positive Philosophy, is the following:—we have no knowledge of anything but phaenomena; and our knowledge of phaenomena is relative, not absolute...

Mill then gives a neat history of this line of thinking in the general history of English philosophy, thereby establishing some of the links between his own school of Utilitarianism and that of Positivism through their commonly shared history of philosophical ideas:

The true doctrine...was probably first conceived in its entire generality by Hume, who carries it a step further than Comte, maintaining not merely that the only causes of phaenomena which can be known to us are other phaenomena, their invariable antecedents, but that there is no other kind of causes; cause, as he interprets it, means the invariable antecedent. This is the only part of Hume's doctrine which was contested by his great

adversary, Kant; who maintaining as strenuously as Comte that we know nothing of things in themselves, of Noumena, of real Substances and real Causes, yet peremptorily asserted their existence... Among the direct successors of Hume, the writer who has best stated and defended Comte's fundamental doctrine is Dr. Thomas Brown...the same great truth formed the ground-work of all the speculative philosophy of Bentham, and pre-eminently of James Mill: and Sir William Hamilton's famous doctrine of the Relativity of human knowledge has guided many to it...

The foundation of M. Comte's philosophy is thus in no way peculiar to him, but the general property of the age, however far as yet from being universally accepted even by thoughtful minds.<sup>23</sup>

What Mill called the 'general property of the age' was a renewed awareness of the importance of observed phenomena to which the single most important contributory factor was science. Mid-nineteenth century English philosophy increasingly felt the urgent need to come to an understanding with science. The urgency is expressed rather quaintly by David Masson in the survey mentioned earlier:

Every generation, every year, brings with it a quantum of new scientific conceptions, new scientific truths. They creep in upon us on all sides. Is philosophy to stand in the midst of them haughtily and superciliously, taking no notice? She cannot do so and live. Whether she knows it or not, these are her appointed food. She must eat them up or perish.<sup>24</sup>

Needless to say, philosophy in the nineteenth century, already favourably disposed towards the significance of observed phenomena, found an ally rather than an enemy in science. The implications of Darwin's evolutionary theory were favourable to the prevailing 'relative spirit' in nineteenth century English philosophy. It became increasingly difficult to hold on to a metaphysical faith in man's ontological uniqueness<sup>25</sup> and a more 'relative' approach was appropriate to the notion of man and society as something evolving, developing. Evolution as a concept, therefore, fitted in beautifully with 'development', a theme that enjoyed considerable prestige among nineteenth century thinkers. It countered effectively what the nineteenth century considered to be a static rigidity in eighteenth century rationalism by introducing a new perspective of man and society as

something moving and developing.<sup>26</sup> Darwinism was quickly absorbed in the general picture of an evolving humanity. It made science acceptable to the righteous-minded intellectuals of the day. A telling illustration may be found in W. H. Mallock's *The New Republic*, that mid-Victorian storehouse of the current stock notions of the day. It occurs in the sermon preached by Dr. Jenkinson, a fictionalised version of Benjamin Jowett :

I just touch in passing upon this doctrine that we popularly call Darwinism, because it is the most familiar example to us of the doctrine of evolution. But the point which I am wishing to emphasise is not the outward evolution of man, but the inward, of which however, the former is an image and a likeness. This theory of moral evolution I wish to point out to you is alike the Christian and the scientific theory ; and I thus wish you to see that the very points in which science seems most opposed to Christianity are really those in which it most fundamentally agrees with it.<sup>27</sup>

Mallock's parody is based on a subtle exaggeration of proportions, but his basic ingredients faithfully represent the dominant trends of thought in the mid-nineteenth century English intellectual scene. This peculiarly high-minded liberal attempt to blend the apparently opposed demands of science and religion<sup>28</sup> ultimately led to a combination that gave a unique flavour to English philosophy in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Hegelianism and Darwinism, the two major trends of thinking, came together to safeguard the superior moral development of man in a world in which the hold of a more orthodox kind of religion was getting loosened.

Hegelianism first arrived in England as an antidote to Darwin and to any form of 'positive' philosophy. Darwin's theory was at first repugnant to the religious thinkers of the day, who considered it a sacrilege against the sacred origin of man. Some of them found refuge in Hegel's Ontological view of the world and felt encouraged by Hegel's contempt for the empirical sciences to carry on a vigorous combat against the degrading influence of science. In the earliest English exposition of Hegel's philosophy, *The Secret of Hegel* (1865), J. H. Stirling ridicules Darwin and 'positive' tendencies in contemporary thought with a vehemence that can only be matched by Carlyle :

As regards the unfriendly "advanced thinkers" who denounce the Idealism and Jargon of German Philosophy, this is as it should be... "There was a time", says Hegel, when a man who did not believe in Ghosts or the Devil was named a Philosopher. But an "advanced thinker" to these distinctions negative of the unseen, adds—what is positive of the seen—an enlightened pride in his father the monkey !...Sink your pedigree as man and adopt for family-tree a procession of the skeletons of monkeys—then superior enlightenment radiates from your very person, and your place is fixed—a place of honour in the acclamant brotherhood that names itself "advanced" !

Stirling then goes on to point out the lamentable situation in England :

So it is in England at present ; this is the acknowledged pinnacle of English thought and English science now. Just point in these days to the picture of some huge baboon, and suddenly before such Enlightenment—superstition is disarmed, priests confess their imposture and the church sinks—beneath the Hippocampus of Gorilla !

Hegel's Idealism was offered by Stirling as a balm to soothe the 'still-vexed' sensibility of the Victorians. Stirling presents Hegel as a great bulwark against the ugly erosions of the human spirit by science :

It is the express mission of Kant and Hegel, in effect, to replace the *negative* of that party by an affirmative : or Kant and Hegel—all but wholly directly both, and one of them quite wholly directly—have no object but to restore Faith—Faith in the Immortality of the Soul and the Freedom of the Will—nay, Faith in Christianity as the Revealed Religion and this too, in perfect harmony with the Right of Private Judgement, and the Rights, or Lights, or Nights of Intelligence in General<sup>29</sup>.

Hegelianism, in its turn, came under a heavy share of ridicule. In defying the law of contradictions Hegel was considered to topple the very claims of Reason itself. In his extremely Positivist *Biographical History of Philosophy* George Henry Lewes, for instance, does not conceal his attitude towards "Hegel's method" :

As a display of perverse ingenuity, stolidly convinced of its entire seriousness and importance, as an example of unhesitating

confidence in the validity of verbal distinctions – the philosophy of Hegel has perhaps never been equalled. As Dr. Ott epigrammatically remarks, “Ici l’absurdité se pose comme méthode fondamentale”<sup>30</sup>.

The identity of contraries which Hegel propounded threatened to topple the fundamental logical structure of all philosophical thinking. As late as 1882 William James wrote from Cambridge, Massachusetts, a virulent attack on what he called ‘Some Hegelisms’. In this article James gave an imaginary account of how Hegel might have resolved the problem of the muddle and incoherence of existence in his confrontation with the universe :

But hark ! What monstrous strain is this that steals upon his ear ? Incoherence itself, may it not be the very sort of coherence I require ? Muddle, is it anything but a peculiar sort of transparency ? Is not jolt passage ? Is friction other than a kind of lubrication ? Is not chasm a filling ? A queer kind of filling but a filling still. Why seek for glue to hold things together when their very falling apart is the only glue you need ? Let all that negation which seemed to disintegrate the universe be the mortar that combines it, and the problem stands solved.

The paradoxical character of the notion could not fail to please a mind monstrous even in its native Germany, where mental excess is endemic. Richard, for a moment brought to bay, is himself again. He vaults into the saddle, and from that time his career is that of a philosophic desperado, one series of outrages upon the chastity of thought.<sup>31</sup>

Heavily satirical though this account is, there is yet a grain of perception in it which might help us to understand why Hegelianism came to be so widely accepted in the philosophical scene. Hegelianism, by trying to incorporate the ‘negative’ into its system, did give a recognition to what William James calls the ‘muddle and incoherence’ of man’s existence that was quite unprecedented in the history of metaphysics as nineteenth century England viewed it.

Hegelianism came and stayed not because it went against the empirical tendency of Pater’s time, but rather because it confirmed it. This is brought home again and again by the kind of emphasis with which the English Hegelians advocate their philosophy. It is true that they felt that science and the ‘Positive’ philosophy had

denuded the world of much of its glory, but they also felt that the vacuum could not be filled by an abstract entity whose very foundation was a denial of the actual world of experience. Caird describes the situation in his book on Hegel as follows :

The scientific sense, which has gradually communicated itself even to many of those who are not scientific, forces us to see in particular things not ideals but merely examples of general classes, and to regard them all as connected to each other by laws of necessary relation, in such a way that they are *ipso facto* deprived of any exceptional or independent position.... Zeus is dethroned, and Vortex reigns in his place.<sup>32</sup>

But against this centrifugal tendency of science Caird does not offer a static Being who would keep everything in rigid order :

To find an object of reverence, we must be able in some way or another to rise to an original source of life, out of which this manifold existence flows, and which in all its variety and change, never forgets or loses itself.... Then we have found that the multiplicity of forms, the endless series of appearances, will begin to take an ideal meaning, because we shall see in them the Protean masks of Being, which is never absolutely hidden, but in the perishing of one form and coming of another is ever more fully revealing itself. It is by this suggestion of such self-revealing unity that Goethe at a touch gives poetic life to the picture of change which modern science has set before us :

In the floods of life, in the storm of deeds,  
Up and down I fly,  
Hither, thither weave,  
From birth to grave,  
An endless weft,  
A changing sea,  
Of glowing life.  
Thus in the whistling loom of time I ply  
Weaving the living robe of Deity.<sup>33</sup>

It is this living touch of reality which the empiricists had felt was lacking in metaphysics that the Hegelians appear to have cherished. The inertia of Kant's Pure Reason was hurled aside by the movement of Hegel's dialectics and an easy passage between the world of Ideas

and the world of Nature was re-established. As Caird says about Hegel :

For him it was necessary to show that the kingdom of nature and spirit are one, in spite of all their antagonism ; nay it was necessary for him to show that this antagonism itself is the manifestation of their unity...what had been regarded as absolute opposites or contradictories, mind and matter, spirit and nature, self-determination and determination by the not-self, must be united and reconciled, and that not by an external harmony, but by bringing out into distinct consciousness the unity that lies beyond their differences and gives it its meaning. To do this indeed, was to break with all the ideas of logical method that had hitherto ruled the schools.<sup>84</sup>

It is in a very similar way that Muirhead retrospectively analysed the coming of Hegel into England. Typically, however, he sees the coming of Hegel as an antidote to the general sense of alienation which had been brought in by Hume's so-called nihilism :

The malady of the age of which Hume's philosophy was the completest expression was the separation of subject from object, the ideal from the real, the individual from society, the finite from the infinite. What was needed was a rational philosophy that should reunite what reason had divided, reclothe what it had destroyed...<sup>85</sup>

According to Muirhead it was precisely this 'rational philosophy' that Hegel provided.

What is misleading about this antithesis between Hume's extreme empiricism and the idealism of Hegel is that it takes our eyes off the extent to which the new Hegelianism made its appeal to experience. Hegelian dialectics admitted a fluidity which has not been permissible in the rigid immutability of Kant's world of Ideas. One of the main reasons why Hegelianism could overcome much of the initial resistance from the empirical schools of thinking is that, like them, it tried to interpret the world not in Absolute but in relative terms. An illustration of this aspect of English Hegelianism may be found in the beautifully written *Prolegomena* which Pater's friend William Wallace added to his own translation of Hegel's *Logic*. Contrasting Hegel's attitude to the Absolute with that of the others, Wallace says :

As a result of the criticism by Kant, Jacobi claimed the Absolute for Faith : and Spencer banishes the Absolute to the sphere of Religion to be worshipped or ignored, but in either case blindly. Hegel, on the contrary, purposes to show that this unfathomable Absolute is very near us, and at our very door : in our hands, as it were, and especially present in our every day language. If we are ever to gain the Absolute, we must be careful not to lose one jot or tittle of the Relative. The Absolute—this term which is to some so offensive and to others so precious—always presents itself to us a Relative... It is a great step when we have detected the Relativity of what had hitherto seemed Absolute,—when a new aspect of the infinite fullness of the spiritual world, the truth of God, dawns upon us.<sup>86</sup>

'Infinite fullness', one might say, is the operative phrase here. Hegelianism was given the special welcome in England in the second half of the nineteenth century, because it was seen as the philosophy of a dynamic 'developing' world, committed to the varied fluid world of actuality ; to quote the words of Wallace again :

What he intended to accomplish with detail and regular evolution was not a system of principle in these departments of action only, but a theory of thought which also manifests itself in Art, Science and Religion, in all the consciousness of ordinary life, and in the movement of the world. Philosophy ranges over the whole field of actuality, or existing fact. Abstract principles are all very well in their way, but they are not philosophy. If the world in its historical and its present life develops into endless detail in regular lines, Philosophy must equally develop the narrowness of its first principles into the plentitude of a system.<sup>87</sup>

The 'plentitude of a system' is what English Hegelianism brought into the speculative world, and it was because of its emphasis on expanse and variety that it could happily assimilate other apparently antagonistic modes of thought such as Positivism and Darwinism. The idea of 'development' which was the special *forte* of nineteenth century thought in general, provided a meeting ground for Hegel and Darwin. A clear example of how the two blended in the nineteenth century mind is an article by D. G. Ritchie called 'Darwin and Hegel' which was read before the Aristotelian Society around 1891. A convinced Hegelian, Ritchie says ;



In the present age the most conspicuously advancing science is biology ; and the categories of organism and evolution are freely transferred to philosophy with the great advantage of lifting it out of the more abstract conception of mathematics or mechanics....<sup>88</sup>

Thus Hegel and Darwin combined to rescue the nineteenth century mind from the rigid eighteenth century world-view dominated by Newtonian mechanics. What Hegel and Darwin had in common was a recognition that the world they had to explain was not a static one, it was moving and developing. Ritchie is aware of the basic difference between Darwin and Hegel, but he emphasises the similarity rather than the difference : 'Hegel's development (*Entwicklung*) is not a time-process but a thought-process ; yet Hegel's method of exposition is such that the thought-process is apt to be read as if it were meant to be a time-process...' Ritchie expands the theme at greater length a little later :

Above all in the history of philosophy does the connection between the thought-process and the time-process come to the surface. The history of philosophy gave Hegel his clue to the logical development of the categories. The simpler and more abstract categories come first in time in the process by which human consciousness becomes gradually aware of the conceptions underlying ordinary thought and language. In the history of Philosophy we have a development from the simpler to the more complex, like that which Evolutionists see in the physical universe. Professor Wallace has well compared Hegel's discovery of the self-development of thought by means of the clue given him in the history of philosophy to Darwin's discovery of the process of evolution in the organic world by the help of the clue given him by artificial selection. "Philosophy", says Professor Wallace, "is to the general growth of intelligence what artificial breeding is to the variation of species under natural conditions"<sup>89</sup>.

#### IV

This bird's eye view of mid-nineteenth century English philosophy, though highly selective, gives us an indication of the intellectual setting for Pater's critical method. An unorthodox participant in the philosophical thinking of his time, Pater's basic position in criticism was a direct outcome of this essentially liberal philosophical

endeavour to establish a bridge between the apparently contradictory claims of physical nature and the inner sources of man's superior moral nature. Pater's initial formulation of the 'relative spirit' which I cited and discussed is just such an attempt to approach man's inner life as an exact parallel to physical nature and its intricate changes. The relative spirit remains the central formula of Pater's criticism throughout his life—possibly there is a slight shift away from his youthful enthusiasm for a total commitment to the changeableness of physical nature towards a growing emphasis on man's relationship with the comparatively more stable aspects of human society and its institutions. But there is nothing in the nature of a 'recantation' in the writings of Pater as far as the commitment to the 'relative' is concerned.<sup>40</sup>

Pater's life-long admiration for the Heraclitean way of thinking is an indication of this commitment. His third published essay, 'The poetry of William Morris', contained a tailpiece which was later incorporated in his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* as its once notorious *Conclusion* in which he presented human mind and physical nature along with the entire social world as perpetually in motion, so that the only viable approach to this spectacle is the 'relative' approach. The close analogy between matter and mind which had inspired Pater's championing of the 'relative' spirit in the Coleridge essay is continued here. The passage begins with the striking claim: 'To regard all things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought'.<sup>41</sup> By modern thought Pater clearly has in mind the new kind of challenges faced by English philosophy, to understand the world of human thought as a projection of physical nature and the senses. In the analysis that follows, Pater sees both physical nature and the world of human thought and feeling as in a perpetual flux. The image that Pater himself suggests for conveying this world-view is that of flame:

This at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence renewed from moment to moment of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.

Or if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring<sup>42</sup>.

The response that Pater recommends to this ever-renewing world of flux is clearly the artistic response:

A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How can we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy is success in life.<sup>43</sup>

Looked at in this way the phrase 'hard gem-like flame' which has since become a byword for the immutability of Aesthetic transcendentalism, yields the very opposite meaning. The sense of motion, which we have seen had invaded mid-nineteenth century English philosophy from the empirical as well as Idealist schools, is captured by Pater in this image of motion in stillness. When, having finished his individual studies in the art and history of the Renaissance, Pater picks out this passage to stand for the conclusion to his book, with a greater awareness of his intellectual debts, he introduces the name of Heraclitus, the Pre-Socratic philosopher of 'motion'.<sup>44</sup>

That Pater derived this acute awareness of the predominance of motion from his reading of contemporary philosophy is spelt out by him in the chapter called 'The Doctrine of Motion' in the series of lectures called *Plato and Platonism* which Pater delivered to a group of young students of philosophy in Oxford. *Plato and Platonism* coming very late in Pater's life contains the most mature expression of Pater's thinking. The chapter on Heraclitus is, therefore, a fair indication of how central the doctrine of motion remained to his philosophical understanding of the world:

.....the most modern metaphysical, and the most modern empirical philosophies alike have illustrated emphatically, justified, expanded, the divination (so we may make bold to call it under the new light now thrown upon it) of the ancient theorist of Ephesus. The entire modern theory of 'development', in all its various phases, proved or unprovable—what is it but old Heracliteanism awake once more in a new world and grown to full proportions?

παντα χωρεῖ παντα ρεῖ — It is the burden of Hegel on the one hand, to whom nature, and art, and polity, and Philosophy, aye, and religion too, each in its long historic series, are but so many conscious moments in the secular process of the eternal-mind;

and on the other hand of Darwin and Darwinism, for which 'type' itself properly *is* not but is only always becoming... Races, laws, arts, have their origins and end, and are themselves ripples only on the great river of organic life ; and the language is changing on our very lips.<sup>45</sup>

The urgency with which Pater had put forward the need for an artistic response stemmed precisely from this inherent changeableness of life. As he had said in his early essay on Morris 'art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake'.<sup>46</sup> Significantly, these are also the concluding lines of Pater's first published book, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873).

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All references to Pater's works are to the complete works of Walter Pater (London 1901), unless otherwise mentioned. ]

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2. Mark Pattison, 'Philosophy at Oxford', *Mind*, Vol. I, 1876, p. 87.
3. 'Study and Opinion in Oxford', *Macmillan's Magazine*, Vol. 21, Dec. 1869, p. 189.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.
5. W. R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London 1965), p. 213.
6. W. W. Jackson, *Ingram Bywater : The Memoir of an Oxford Scholar* (Oxford 1917), p. 78.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
8. G. M. Hopkins, *The Journals and Papers of G. M. Hopkins*, ed. Humphry House, completed by Graham Storey (London 1959), p. 138.
9. A. C. Benson, *Walter Pater* (London 1906), p. 20.
10. Wright's dismissal occurs in a curt sentence about this article 'which, by the by, has pleased nobody'. Thomas J. Wright, *Walter Pater* (London 1907),

Vol. I, p. 226. Bywater's full tribute to the essay reads as follows: 'All this was in his period of intellectual *Sturm und Drang*, the end of which is marked by his marvellous Essay on Coleridge, which, though anonymous, took the cultivated world by storm'. W. W. Jackson, *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

11. In 1882 when William Sharp wrote to Pater that he had 'discovered and recovered' each article that Pater had written, and sent him the list, Pater replied, 'The list you sent me is complete with the exception of an article on Coleridge in the *Westminster* of January 1866, with much of which, both as to matter and manner I should now be greatly dissatisfied'. William Sharp, *Papers Critical and Reminiscent* (London 1912), p. 209.

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13. *Plato and Platonism*, p. 40.

14. 'Coleridge's Writings', p. 108.

15. *Plato and Platonism*, p. 40.

16. David Masson, *Recent British Philosophy* (London 1865), pp. 28-29.

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25. John Passmore, 'Darwin's impact on British metaphysics', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (September 1959), Darwin Anniversary Issue, pp. 43-44.

26. For a clarification of the issues, see Morse Peckham, 'Darwinism and Darwinisticism', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 1, p. 23.

27. Pp. 143-144.

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29. J. H. Stirling, *The Secret of Hegel* (London 1865), p. xii and pp. xxxi-xxxii.

30. G. H. Lewes, *Biographical History of Philosophy* (London 1845), p. 205.

31. William James, 'On Some Hegelisms', *Mind*, Vol. viii, 1882, p. 193.

32. Edward Caird, *Hegel* (London 1863), p. 113.

33. Ibid., p. 114.
34. Ibid., p. 128.
35. J. H. Muirhead 'How Hegel Came to England', *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* (London 1931), pp. 160-161.
36. W. Wallace, 'Prolegomena', *The Logic of Hegel* (Oxford 1874), p. cxiii.
37. Ibid., p. 66.
38. D. G. Ritchie, *Darwin and Hegel, with other Philosophical Studies* (London 1893), p. 41.
39. Ibid., p. 47.
40. There is a popular belief about Pater's hasty retreat into propriety once the alleged immorality of his *Renaissance* had shocked the Victorian public. Pater's withdrawal of the 'Conclusion' in the second edition also produces this impression. When Pater withdrew his essay 'Aesthetic Poetry' from the second and all subsequent editions of *Appreciations* Miss Bradley entered in the Journals she kept jointly with Miss Cooper: "He has struck out the Essay on Aesthetic Poetry in *Appreciations* (for second edition) because it gave offence to some pious person—he is getting hopelessly prudish in literature, and defers to the moral weakness of everybody. Deplorable!" *Journals of Michael Field*, Brit. Mus. Add, MS 46778, fol. 205. Cited in *Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. Lawrence Evans. (Oxford 1970), p. 113, footnote to Letter 188.
- But the reason for the second omission may well have been more intrinsic. The Conclusion was restored in the third edition as soon as Pater has satisfied himself that he had spelt out the moral implications of the cryptic *Conclusion* at greater length in *Marius the Epicurean* (*Renaissance*, p. 233). Pater may have had more basic objection against the somewhat overcharged writing in 'Aesthetic Poetry' which may account for its never appearing again.
41. "Poems of William Morris", *The Westminster Review*, Vol. 34 n.s. October 1868, pp. 309-10.
42. Ibid., p. 310.
43. Ibid., p. 311.
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45. *Plato and Platonism*, pp. 19-21.
46. 'Poems of William Morris', p. 312.

## BEN JONSON'S THEORY OF COMEDY

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SUDESHNA CHAKRAVARTY

TO Ben Jonson criticism is an important activity. The true critic is very different from the fashionable censor whom he ridicules in the Prologue to *Every Man Out of his Humour* :

A fellow, that has neither arte nor braine,  
Sit like an Aristarchus, or starke-asse  
Taking mens lines with a tabacco face.<sup>1</sup>

Rather "the office of a true Critick or Censor, is (to)...judge sincerely of the Author, and his matter, which is the signe of solid, and perfect learning in a man."<sup>2</sup> Jonson assigns a great importance to criticism in his works. Of all the Elizabethan dramatists, he is probably the most self-conscious about his art. He has a sound theoretical basis for his art, and throughout his work—in his Epigrammes, Conversations, the inductions and prologues to his plays, as well as in the dramatised portraits of the ideal poet—we find Jonson expounding the critical ideas and principles that lay behind his artistic composition. He is the first to work in theoretical discussions in his plays. Indeed, as Harry Levis justly remarks, "Jonson is commonly conceived as a man who wrote comedies because he had a theory about why comedies should be written."<sup>3</sup> His reputation as comic theorist has been largely responsible for his forbidding, pedantic image.

To understand Jonson's theory of comedy one must turn to the plays themselves—particularly the prologues and inductions—as well as to the remarks scattered through his prose work—*Timber, or Discoveries*; *Made upon Men and Matter, as they have flow'd out of his daily readings*; or *had their refluxe to his peculiar Notion of the Times*—first published posthumously in the Folio edition of 1640-1. This work, largely composed of jottings and casual observations that occurred to him in the course of his creative activity, is in the nature of a commonplace book. Much of the material is derivative. Modern scholarship has traced borrowings from various classical and

Renaissance sources— Cicero, Petronius, Quintilian, the two Senecas, Erasmus, Machiavelli, Vives, Bacon and others— as well as his immediate preceptor Sidney. Yet the final result is more than a mere compilation. The very choice of material is highly significant, while the pithy, vigorous style gives the book a stamp of originality. *Timber* is not merely a stock book of conventional classical ideas— it gives an illuminating insight into Jonson's personal views on art, into those ideas which he adopted as the guiding principles for his literary activity. He has gleaned from the classical masters some of their basic literary theories and principles of judgement, but, as he himself is going to emphasise repeatedly, he is no servile imitator; he considers himself at liberty to freely adapt, expand or modify.

The animating motive of his criticism is his conviction that literature in his day is in a bad way, and urgently needs to be salvaged. "Nothing in our Age, I have observed, is more preposterous than the running judgements upon Poetry, and Poets; when we shall heare those things commended and cry'd up for the best writings, which a man would scarce vouchsafe, to wrap any wholesome drug in ... A man cannot imagine that thing so foolish, or rude, but will find, and enjoy an Admirer; at least a Reader or Spectator."<sup>4</sup> The Poetaster is for Jonson a particularly despicable character, and always a target for virulent attack, for in pandering to vulgar taste he is debasing the noblest of professions. The contrast of the false and true poet is one of the recurring themes of Jonsonian Comedy. "Meere Elocution; or an excellent faculty in verse"— that is, mere technical finesse— cannot make a genuine poet; he needs to have "the exact knowledge of all vertues, and their Contraries; with ability to render the one lov'd, the other hated, by his proper embattaling them".<sup>5</sup> The poet is always a moral teacher. Even an early play like *Every Man in his Humour* emphasises the essential difference between the foolishly pretentious poet Matheo and the attractive Lorenzo Junior who is sincerely dedicated to poetry. Matheo must finally be punished with the full weight and vigour of Jonson the Moraliser— his verses must be set on fire. Indeed, the severity of the punishment disturbs the comic tone of the play— one cannot help feeling that the note of harsh invective is incongruous in the context of the genial laughter at the eccentricities of fools and gulls. But the poetaster in Jonson can never expect leniency. Contrasted with Matheo is the impassioned defence of poetry by Lorenzo Junior;



The state of poesie, such as it is,  
 Blessed, eternal, and most true divine.  
 .....fit to be seen  
 Of none but grave and consecrated eyes.

It is "this barren and infected age" which is incapable of distinguishing between "such leane, ignorant and blasted wits" whose "slubberd lines have current passe / From the fat judgements of the multitude" and the "true Poet : than which reverend name / Nothing can more adorne humanitie."<sup>6</sup> The characters in *Every Man in his Humour* are judged by their response to poetry. While Matheo and Bobadilla have a lamentable taste in literature, and Lorenzo Senior is narrow minded-ly prejudiced against all forms of poetry, Doctor Clement, who represents the ethical centre of the play, has a genuine admiration for the true poet and understands his worth. This same theme is developed more elaborately in *The Poetaster*. This play is more than a scurrilous personal attack on some of Jonson's contemporaries. Admittedly, the Poet's War was the immediate reason for its composition. But this is also a play which is deeply concerned with art and its true function in society—hence the contrast that is emphasised between the two poetasters Demetrius and Crispinus and the noble Horace. The Dedicatory Epistle to *Volpone* asserts once more Jonson's main preoccupations—emphasising the seriousness of his aims, his scorn of his contemporaries who were debasing literature by their vulgarity and grossness, his consciousness of his duty as reformer and preserver of the true seriousness of poetry. The writers of his day were abusing the name of poet—"now, especially in dramatick, or (as they term it) stage-poetrie, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy, all licence of offence to God, and men, is practised"<sup>7</sup> He holds himself aloof from such baseness, adhering faithfully to "the doctrine, which is the principall end of poesie, to informe men in the best reason of living."<sup>8</sup> To be such a moral teacher, the poet must also be a good man, exemplifying the moral perfection that he endeavours to inculcate through his writing. Finally, Jonson declares that it is his aim to "raise the despised head of poetrie againe, and stripping her out of those rotten and base rags wherewith the times have adulterated her form, restore her to her primitive habit, feature and majesty, and render her worthy to be imbraced and kist of all the great and master-spirits of our world."<sup>9</sup>

In the Prologue to the revised version of *Every Man in his*

*Humour* we find Jonson contemptuously dismissing contemporary drama as escapist and wildly improbable, somewhat arrogantly offering his play as "One such, to-day, as other playes should be"<sup>10</sup> — in short, as the model comedy. This prologue is of central importance for understanding Jonson's theory of comedy. It stands as a comic manifesto— an explicit declaration of his aims in writing comedy. He begins with an attack on "th'ill customes of the age"<sup>11</sup> — on the drama of his day, which indulges in the crudest romantic excesses, which has lost touch with life, which indeed is gratuitous art, serving no moral purpose. Instead of such folly, he will present his audience with the ideal comedy— a comedy which deals with "deedes, and language, such as men doe use, / And persons, such as Comoedie would chuse / When she would shew an Image of the times"<sup>12</sup>. Realism is therefore an important feature of this new comedy which moves away from romantic fantasies to the concerns of everyday reality. Partly in justification of this claim to realism, Jonson changes the setting from Italy to Jacobean London— the London which forms the background to most of his mature comedies. Sidney had pointed out that "we delight in things that have a conveniency to ourselves or to the general nature", but it is Jonson who is really the first to emphasise realism as an important element of comedy. But comedy is not merely the image of the times— it is also the function of the comic poet to "sport with humane follies, not with crimes"<sup>13</sup>. One can argue that the distinction between folly and crime is somewhat tenuous— how are we to describe the failings exposed in *Volpone*? But the moral purpose of writing comedy is firmly established. Comedy to Jonson is a serious art form— its ultimate purpose is didactic. As he says in *Discoveries*, comedy, like tragedy, must delight and teach. The immediate source for this conception of comedy seems to be Sidney's definition— "Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he presenteth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be ; so as it is impossible that any beholder may be content to be such a one". But what is remarkable is Jonson's relegation of laughter in comedy to a purely secondary role (he certainly diverges from his theory in practice)— "Nor, is the moving of laughter alwaies the end of Comedy, that is rather for the peoples delight, or their fooling. For, as Aristotle saies rightly, the moving of laughter is a fault in Comedie, a kind of turpitude..."<sup>14</sup>. Jonson therefore comes out

very strongly in favour of a didactic comedy. To him the comic poet is a kind of social monitor, entrusted with the task of disciplining erring human nature.

Thus in the Prologue to *Every Man in his Humour* Jonson places himself clearly in a realistic-satiric tradition of comedy. Although he adopts a Plautine plot-structure in *Every Man in his Humour* as C. G. Thayer points out<sup>15</sup>, his didactic theory brings him closer to the Old Comedy of Aristophanes rather than the Comedy of Menander or Plautus and Terence. For, although in *Discoveries* Jonson criticises Aristophanes for his scurrilous personal attacks, it is to Aristophanes that we must turn to find a vigorous attack on contemporary men and manners—a use of comedy as a vehicle for social criticism. Any social criticism in New Comedy is merely incidental.

The induction of *Every Man out of his Humour* carries further this exposition of Jonson's comic theory. Indeed, the three Comicall Satyres are of especial importance for an understanding of Jonson's Comedy. Here we see Jonson consciously trying to put his critical theory to practice. The very name Comicall Satyre is significant, showing the deliberate linking up of two genres—Comedy and Satire. The lengthy induction of *Every Man out of his Humour* is devoted mainly to exposition and self-defence. The device of the play within a play allows Jonson to weave critical discussions of the play into the play itself. The two spectators Mitis and Cordatus offer a sustained choric commentary, and through them Jonson has an excellent opportunity for voicing his own opinions and justifying his dramatic technique. He explicitly links his comedy with *Vetus Comoedia*. Mitis demands if the dramatist has observed "all the lawes of Comedie"<sup>16</sup>—such as the division into acts and scenes, the use of the chorus, the observance of the Unities. This allows Jonson, through Cordatus, to vigorously defend any departure from established tradition—for, after all, the entire evolution of comedy is nothing but a series of innovations in dramatic method, and "I see not then, but we should enjoy the same licence or free power to illustrate and heighten our invention as they did; and not bee tyed to those strict and regular formes, which the nicenesse of a few...would thrust upon us".<sup>17</sup> Later on, Mitis complains about the absence of any romantic intrigue—whereupon Cordatus retorts with Cicero's definition of

comedy... "a thing throughout pleasant and ridiculous and accommodated to the correction of manners"<sup>18</sup>. The induction also includes a detailed exposition of the theory of humours, which is too often given undue emphasis and in fact has little relevance to Jonson's didactic theory of comedy. Jonson merely uses this theory to justify a certain technique of characterisation. To consider his comedies solely as humour comedies is to ignore their real satiric significance.

But most important, *Every Man Out of his Humour*, like the two other Comickall Satyres, shows Jonson attempting to project the figure of the poet-teacher into the play. In Asper he gives us the first of his portraits of the ideal satirist. He is like the good man of *Discoveries*—one of "the Stars and Planets of the Ages wherein they live, and illustrate the times", one who "plac'd high on the top of all vertue, look'd downe on the stage of the world, and contemned the Play of Fortune. For though the most be Players, some must be Spectators"<sup>19</sup>. George Parfitt has pointed out the significance of the passage<sup>20</sup>. The good man must have an inviolability, as well as a certain detachment, well summed up in the image of the star. But he has also a responsible role in society. He must "illustrate" the times—a word suggesting at once that he must be a model and inspiration to men of his age but also that he must illuminate both what is good and what is bad to others. This is Jonson's conception of the role of the artist—and in his plays we see him attempting to define the good man, to present him in art, and use him as an agent to pin-down vice and folly. Asper is such a figure—a man whose moral integrity authorises him to adopt the stance of the detached observer, the chastiser of human nature. He is a man "of an ingenious and free spirit, eager and constant in reproofe, without feare controuling the worlds abuse"<sup>21</sup>. Through Asper Jonson utters with passionate eloquence the lofty and driving scorn which is the animating spirit of his satire. Asper announces that it is his noble aim to "strip the ragged follies of the time / Naked, as at their truth"<sup>22</sup>. The play will be a "mirrour" where the audience will "see the times deformitie/Anatomized in every neyve, and sinnew".<sup>23</sup> The tone has become more mordant than that of *Every Man In his Humour* with its emphasis on the more genial "humane follies". The induction however is not without dramatic interplay, as the more moderate Mitis and Cordatus attempt to temper Asper's corrective zeal. It is clear that Asper's vision has Jonson's approval—but in the actual play it

is given no clear focus, so that the savage indignation becomes dramatically incongruous. It is worth noting that in the play itself Asper is metamorphosised into the malcontent Macilente—a widely-travelled scholar, but one in whom social malaise has resulted in “an envious apoplexie...that he growes violently impatient of any opposite happiness in another<sup>24</sup>, an intemperate railer whose anger against the world that has disappointed him is so intense that he would like to destroy it altogether. Macilente’s indignation is altogether excessive in the dramatic context—he sees follies as vices, amusing comic characters as “monstrous prodigies”. At times he seems to be motivated by nothing more than sheer spite—as in the poisoning of Puntavarlo’s dog. If Jonson has projected the satirist figure in *Every Man Out of his Humour*, one can argue that the portrayal is not wholly uncritical. As Parfitt remarks<sup>25</sup>, *Every Man Out of his Humour* considers the formal satirist as a possible agent for the kind of moral analysis Jonson wishes to make—and finds the figure wanting.

Crites in *Cynthia’s Revels* is subjected to no such critical scrutiny. Like Asper, he is an analyst-cum-satirist figure. But whereas Asper is controlled to some extent by Cordatus, Crites is presented in extravagantly—almost embarrassingly—adulatory terms. He is of course morally immaculate, “a creature of a most perfect and divine temper, one in whom the humours and elements are peaceably met, without emulation of precedencie—in all so composit and order’d, as it is cleare, Nature went about some ful worke, she did more than make a man, when she made him”<sup>26</sup>. But this goodness remains abstract—merely stated rather than demonstrated through dramatic interaction with the other characters. Mercury enlists Crites in his services—asking him to help him in chastising the wayward courtiers—“And by that worthy scorne, to make them know/How farre beneath the dignity of man /Their serious, and most practised actions are”<sup>27</sup>.

Once again we note an imbalance between this righteous indignation and the kind of lighthearted folly that is the actual target of attack. As a character Crites remains an abstraction. Jonson cannot envisage a dramatic situation which will give the satirist a convincing role. The rigidity of *Cynthia’s Revels* betrays a dramatic conception which remains on the theoretic, abstract level, without

being tested in the context of a real, complex situation. It gives the play a static, formal, masque-like quality.

The last of the Comickall Satyres, *The Poetaster*, offers the most sustained exploration of such critical issues. The tendency is to interpret it almost exclusively in the light of the Poet's War in which Jonson played an active part. There is no doubt that personal rancour played a part in the composition of the play—one can justifiably identify particular characters with certain dramatists of the time. But one must also recognise that the play goes beyond such a narrow context. *The Poetaster* is a play which is concerned with art—with a defence of literary standards, with defining the role of the artist in the community. After all, apart from Demetrius and Crispinus we have other artist figures, both true and false, serious and irresponsible—Virgil, Ovid, and of course Horace—the satirist figure, conventionally regarded as a flattering self-portrait. In Horace we find the most elaborate portrait of the ideal satirist. He is basically the voice of reason—the man who is able to stand above the petty intrigues which absorb lesser men like Demetrius and Crispinus, who “pursues” “with a constant firmnesse” a “meane”<sup>20</sup> according to which he judges the follies of society. A contrast is drawn between Horace and Ovid Junior. As in the case of Lorenzo Junior, Ovid's devotion to poetry in the face of the disapproval of his stern father attracts our sympathy—he is given an impassioned defence of poetry, and his final banishment strikes us as too harsh. But to Jonson Ovid is to be criticised. Unlike Horace, who preserves the lofty detachment of the good man of *Discoveries*, Ovid allows himself to be drawn into a foolish masquerade. He is guilty of a misuse of talent—his is a case of moral irresponsibility. The true poet must be morally above reproach.

Jonson brings down all his scorn on the two poetasters. Beyond the personal rancour, they become types of the false poet—those who endanger the body politic by

“the sinister application  
Of the malicious, ignorant and base  
Interpreter”<sup>21</sup>.

Hence the severity of their punishment is justified. The climax comes in the well-known scene where Crispinus is given emetic and forced to vomit out his inkhorn terms and afterwards recommended a diet of standard authors for his recuperation. The

emetic is administered with great righteousness by Horace, backed by the authority of Augustus and Virgil. The scene, indeed, is offensive—once again one feels that the intensity of the loathing threatens to disrupt the comic mood.

The presence of Virgil at the climactic moment is worth noting. He is the ideal poet as Jonson imagines him in *Discoveries*—the embodiment of all that is morally sublime and artistically perfect. He is a worthy ornament of the court of Augustus—the ideal ruler who recognises the true worth of “sweet poesie”—“which is of all the faculties on earth / The most abstract and perfect”<sup>80</sup>. Augustus bows to the superior authority of Virgil, whose writings can offer a moral guide “distill’d / Through all the needful uses of our lives”.<sup>81</sup> Virgil recognises the need for self-examination and self-discipline. Not only is he ‘refin’d/From all the tartarous moodes of common men...’ but also “most severe / In fashion and collection of himselfe”.<sup>82</sup> A man of immense scholarship, his learning is not a matter of merely re-echoing erudite terms. In short, Virgil unites in himself the virtues of Nature, Exercise, Study and Art—those qualities which for Jonson go to the making of the perfect artist, who of course is also the type of the good man.

Through Virgil Jonson gives a vigorous defence of satire. Whereas the poetaster indulges in personal invective, the satirist is inspired by a sincere reforming zeal. If his criticism seems severe, that only adds to his credit—it is the mark of a “suffering vertue / Oppressed with the licence of the times”<sup>83</sup>. And in the epilogue Horace asserts his undying devotion to his artistic principles—“I will write Satires still, in spite of fear”.

*The Poetaster* represents Jonson’s most sustained attempt to embody his artistic ideals in dramatic form. Yet dramatically the play is a failure. Once again the ideal poet fails to become dramatically alive. At the climactic moment the adulation freezes the action. Jonson still finds it difficult to give an effective role to his ideal artist figure.

Significantly, after the Comicall Satyres the satirist / analyst figure disappears from Jonsonian comedy. As Jonson attempts to measure his abstract artistic ideals against the aggressive, incorrigible, bustling reality around him, he comes up against formidable difficulties. The contrary tendencies in *The Poetaster*—on the one hand, an over-righteous indignation and on the other, a wholly uncritical admira-

tion—cannot be brought together in a well-knit dramatic framework. Rather, they tend to pull the work askew and result in a loss of dramatic coherence. And as Jonson turns his attention more and more towards the complex disordered reality of his time he finds it increasingly difficult to embody his artistic ideals in any meaningful dramatic action. For he realises that quotidian reality resists correction—that the satirist cannot effect a miraculous conversion of human nature. The *Comicall Satyres* had shown him too optimistic about the power of satire to discipline manners and morals. He seemed to think that if one could hold up a mirror to human nature and effectively demonstrate the folly of vice and the nobility of virtue, men would automatically reform their ways. But this belief that art can be used for moral instruction collides with his honesty in the face of experience. In the anarchic gaiety of *Bartholomew Fair* art must be reduced to Nightingale's song—which is used as a cover for pocket-picking—or to the puppet play, which is used to "confound" Busy, but which is also a disturbing image of vulgarity and littleness—a perversion of the loftiest ideals. The present age can only accommodate the lofty ideals of love and friendship by reducing them to the level of an obscene tavern brawl. It is fitting that a play which recognises the futility of all attempts to amend should also acknowledge that art can never effect any facile transformation of the vicious and foolish.

Contrary to established opinion, we never find in Jonson's comedies a mechanical application of his abstract theories of satire. Rather, we see his uncompromising honesty in attempting to place his theories in the context of actual experience, and the very hesitations and artistic problems of his *Comicall Satyres* are indications of the inevitable gap that must exist between theory and practice. As we move to the mature comedies, we find an increasing awareness of the difficulty of maintaining the balanced, detached, analytic position of the satirist. We sense the problems of the didactic artist attempting to maintain his corrective stance in the face of an overwhelming, intractable reality.

The conventional image of Jonson as the exemplar of a rigid "classical" theory of comedy needs to be qualified. After all, Jonson never advocates a slavish adherence to the rules of the ancients. Admittedly, he draws freely from earlier authorities. In



the concluding notes on plot and fable in *Discoveries*, for example, he more or less reproduces the ideas of Aristotle. "For hee that was onely taught by himselfe, had a foole to his master".<sup>84</sup> But he is also firm in stipulating that servile imitation is not enough. We have seen how in the Induction to *Every Man Out of his Humour* he justifies divergence from earlier comic practice. His claim is not that he is reviving classical comedy, but that he is taking the ancient rules as guides for evolving a new, purer form of comedy. So also in *Sejanus—To the Readers* he admits that he is breaking away from classical canons—that, judged by rigid classical standards his play would be found wanting, for it lacks the unity of time, nor does it have a proper chorus. But once again he justifies such irregularity. "Nor is it needful, or almost possible in these our times, and to such auditors as commonly things are presented, to observe the old state and splendour of dramatic poems, with preservation of any popular delight." He thus recognises that the nature of contemporary audiences must be taken into account—any over-faithful observation of classical rules becomes mere pedantry. Jonson strove to return to the ordered harmony and discipline of the ancients—but he always warned against the folly of clinging on to outworn precepts.

In drawing on the authority of the ancients Jonson is after all true to his age. The creative exuberance of the English Renaissance was not incompatible with a steady interest in classical models. But it was far from a servile prostration before classical authority. Jonson's respect for the ancients is coupled with a sturdy belief in the possibilities of the native genius. "To all the observations of the Ancients we have our owne experience.... Truth lyes open to all ; it is no mans severall."<sup>85</sup> Without the aid of Nature, Art can do nothing. All learning is in vain "without a naturall art and a Poeticall nature in chief".<sup>86</sup> What we find in Jonson is the fusion of contrary tendencies. Just as in his plays we find a potentially anarchic comic imagination and an ingrained earthy realism united with the classicist's discipline and shaping intelligence, so also in his criticism we find a genuine admiration for the permanent and fundamental artistic principles of the ancients co-existing with an unwavering faith in originality and in the creative potentialities of the native literary genius.

NOTES

All references to Jonson's Works are from the collected edition edited by C. H. Herford and P. and S. Simpson—II vols. (Oxford, 1925)—henceforth referred to as H/S.

1. *Every Man Out of his Humour*—H/S. Vol. III—Induction l. 178-180.
2. *Discoveries*—H/S Vol. VIII—P. 642.
3. Introduction—Selected Works of Ben Jonson—ed. by Harry Levin, Random House, Inc. 1938—P. 5.
4. *Discoveries*—op. cit.—P. 581-2.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 595.
6. *Every Man in his Humour*—Quarto of 1601—H/S Vol. III ACT V Sc 3, l. 316-7 ; 332-3 ; 335-343.
7. *Volpone*—H/S Vol. V—Dedicatory Epistle—l. 36-38.
8. *Ibid.*, l. 107-109.
9. *Ibid.*, l. 129-134.
10. *Every Man In his Humour*—Folio of 1616. H/S Vol. III—Prologue—l. 14.
11. *Ibid.*, l. 4.
12. *Ibid.*, l. 21-23.
13. *Ibid.*, l. 24.
14. *Discoveries*— op. cit., p. 643.
15. *Ben Jonson—Studies in the Plays*—C. G. Tzayer—University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.
16. *Every Man Out of his Humour*— op. cit., Induction. l. 235.
17. *Ibid.*, Induction—l. 266-270.
18. *Ibid.*, Act III Sc. 6. l. 207-209.
19. *Discoveries*— op. cit., p. 597.
20. *Ben Jonson: Public Poet and Private Man*, George Parfitt—J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1976, p. 25.
21. *Every Man Out of his Humour*, op. cit., Prologue.
22. *Ibid.*, Induction, l. 17-18.
23. *Ibid.*, Induction, l. 118-121.
24. *Ibid.*, Prologue.
25. Parfitt, op. cit. p. 48.
26. *Cynthia's Revels*—H/S Vol. IV—Act II Sc. 3, l. 123-125 ; 128-130.
27. *Ibid.*, Act V Sc. 1, l. 20-23.
28. *The Poetaster*—H/S Vol. IV—Prologue—l. 22-3.
29. *Ibid.*, Act V Sc. 3, l. 140-3.
30. *Ibid.*, Act V Sc. 1, l. 18-19.
31. *Ibid.*, Act V Sc. 1, l. 119-20.
32. *Ibid.*, Act V Sc. 1, l. 102-106.
33. *Ibid.*, Act V Sc. 3, l. 367-70.
34. *Discoveries*— op. cit., p. 563.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 567.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 640.

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